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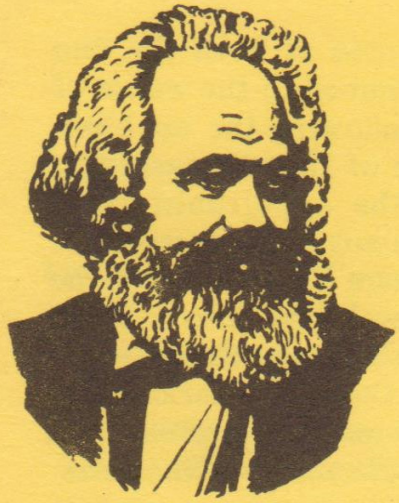
&
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND



THE IRISH CASE FOR COMMUNISM

The Building of the Marxist–Leninist Party (1930–1935)

THE CORK WORKERS' CLUB

INTRODUCTION

The Irish Communist Party which was represented at both the 2nd and 4th World Congress of the Comintern, succumbed to the welter of confusion into which the masses were thrown, following the establishment of the Irish Free State and the suppression of the war against it. Then the struggle led by Jim Larkin against the opportunist trade union bureaucrats led to a split in the trade unions and the isolation of the revolutionary workers. The Irish Workers League which he formed in 1923, had all the appearance of developing into a Communist Party. It received recognition from the Comintern and represented Ireland at the 5th and 6th World Congress. Larkin was elected to the Executive Committee of the Communist International which was responsible for Comintern affairs between the Congresses. However, the I. W. L. leadership were unable to pursue a consistent proletarian revolutionary policy, it fell into the wake of national reformism and lost its following among the revolutionary workers.

From 1930 a consistent struggle for the formation of the Communist Party of Ireland was carried on by the Revolutionary Workers Groups, and its weekly paper, the *Irish Worker's Voice*. In October, 1931, the R.W.G. and the *Irish Worker's Voice*, were outlawed by the Free State Government under its Coercion Act. However the attacks against the R.W.G. organised by the Irish bourgeoisie in order to prevent the mobilisation of the revolutionary vanguard of the Irish proletariat for the formation of the C.P.I., did not prevent the R.W.G. from participation in the struggle of the workers against the capitalist offensive. The combination of the struggle for the formation of the party with the everyday struggles of the workers against the capitalist attack on their wages, hours, conditions, etc., and against unemployment and for social insurance, in defence of the small farmers being evicted for non-payment of land annuities, mortgages, etc., was a living necessity in order to rally around the revolutionary vanguard, the R.W.G., and to show the masses in deeds that the Communists were devoted to the struggle for the defence of the interests of the workers and small farmers.

The R.W.G. saw in the organisation of the revolutionary vanguard of the Irish proletariat into the C.P.I., the first essential step towards winning the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This task was achieved when on the 4th and 5th June, 1933, delegates from the four corners of Ireland met for the Inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland.

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THE IRISH CASE FOR COMMUNISM

The New Situation

In the year 1896 James Connolly, the pioneer of revolutionary Marxian Socialism in Ireland, returned to Ireland and founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party, which set itself the aim of "The establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic based upon the public ownership by the people of Ireland of the land and instruments of production, distribution and exchange."

In pursuance of his policy of organising the Irish working class "to meet their masters and destroy their mastership" Connolly and his associates encountered from first to last the violent opposition of the ascendancy imperialists, and all the forces of gombeenism and clericalism. A combination of all these brought his life of service to the Irish workers to an end in 1916—British bullets blessed with the editorials of the Martin Murphy capitalist and clerical newspapers.

To-day the revolutionary workers of Ireland are confronted with the completion of the task begun by their leader at the end of the last century. The national oppression of the Irish people has taken a new form. "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland" is no more: it has given place to the disunited Irish nation of the Irish Free State and the Six Counties. Leinster House and Stormont have taken the place of Whitehall. Donal Buckley, grocer, Maynooth, and the Duke of Abercorn, aristocrat, have taken the place of the Buckshot Fosters, the Balfours and the Birrells as representatives of the imperial British yoke on the Irish nation. In this is embodied an important phase of Irish history, the new form of Irish national oppression. What has happened?

This. British imperialism confronted with the organised power of the Irish working masses led by revolutionary Socialists and nationalists like Connolly, Pearse and Mellows, could no longer maintain its traditional form of Castle government. So it left Ireland, but in safe hands. It made a bargain—the 1921 Treaty—with a section of the Irish people, the Irish capitalist class. This bargain meant that the booty wrung from the Irish people for generations was henceforth to be divided among the English imperialists and their Irish allies the capitalists—with a bigger share to the latter than they had hitherto been getting. The British imperialists got away with the farmers' annuities—the Irish manufacturers get tariffs. The Castle servants got their pensions, and the taxation of big incomes reduced. But the workers were deprived of social insurance and driven in thousands on to Poor Law. These are a few of the effects of the 1921 agreement on the different classes. In other words, the Irish capitalists on the basis of the revolutionary

sacrifices of the Irish working masses have come to power in Ireland. They have reached this position by the betrayal of the Irish national cause, which betrayal has compelled them to share, the power and plunder of the Irish toilers with the British ruling class.

And so to-day the task of winning Irish independence from British imperialism is directly linked with the struggle to abolish the rule of the present ruling class in Ireland—the Irish capitalists. Buckley has dislodged MacNeil from the Viceregal Lodge; the smaller Irish capitalists have—temporarily at least—displaced the larger Anglo-Irish imperialist capitalists in the political leadership of the State. But the task of winning national freedom and unity remains. What class is to lead the struggle? Only the class which can fight the capitalists—the Irish working class in alliance with the working farmers and all toilers.

The generations old struggle for Irish freedom therefore enters a new phase, assumes the form of sharp class war between the main force of the capitalists who want inclusion in the Empire, or in the case of the smaller manufacturers represented by the Fianna Fail Party, more advantageous terms of association with imperialism; and the masses of the Irish workers and farmers whose future lies in an independent Ireland outside the Empire.

Because Ireland's struggle has entered this, its final phase, with the issue of the working class *versus* the capitalists and the imperialists high on the agenda, the cry of Communism is to be heard in street and valley. The capitalist Press, daily and weekly, lay and clerical, belches forth a steady torrent of propaganda against Communism, coupled with its campaign of pro-British sabotage on behalf of the ranchers and big capitalists; encouraging the organisation of an army of White mercenaries to intimidate the workers and working farmers. "For England and against Communism" is the scarcely-disguised slogan of the capitalist crusaders. It is now necessary as never before for Irish workers and all national revolutionaries to get clearly in mind what this Communism is, from which their enemies are so anxious to save them. What does an Irish Communist Party stand for?

Ireland and the Crisis

The question of the Communist Party, the questions of Communism, capitalism, imperialism, are burning issues confronting all classes. These issues have to be faced by all classes and parties. They stare the workers in the face, whether in the daily battle for bread or on the wider issue of national independence. How does this arise now so sharply? There has been a struggle for national freedom for generations in Ireland; there has been unemployment always under capitalism; there have been fights for higher wages and against reductions of wages. Yet the issue of Communism was not before the classes in Ireland as to-day.

First, on the daily struggle for a livelihood, for work, unemployment insurance, relief, wages. How does this elemental struggle for a living call in question the capitalist system and raise the issue of a Workers' and Farmers' Republic now and not in earlier times?

The answer is to be found in the present state of capitalist society the world over. The capitalists who control industry, government, finance and commerce are unable to give work to millions of workers. They cannot sell what the workers have already produced. Their granaries are filled with grain, their warehouses are choked with food and clothing. These were produced in order to be sold by the capitalists at a profit. There is nobody to buy them, hence the workers who produced the goods are starving. This is what is called the economic crisis in which all capitalist countries, including Ireland, are involved in varying degrees.

This economic crisis differs from all preceding crises—for there have always been periodic crises under capitalism—in this respect. Such crises as those of 1825, 1847-8, 1869, etc., took place in conditions of expanding capitalism. England was then practically the only highly developed capitalist nation in the world. Whole regions of the earth were not touched by the capitalist market—the so-called backward countries in Africa, Asia and South America. This meant that when the existing market became too limited and over-production ensued, it was possible for the capitalists to push into new fields and so solve the crisis for another period.

This state of affairs is now ended. All the principal European nations—France, Italy, Germany—plus the United States have overtaken, and in several cases passed, England as industrial capitalist countries. The era of world imperialism, in which the entire world is divided among the leading capitalist nations has taken the place of the old period of capitalism. This means that the capitalists of a particular country in the scramble to solve their difficulties by finding new markets are inevitably led into conflict with one another. This was seen in the world-war of 1914-18 and is seen to-day in the fresh preparations for further conflicts now proceeding between the leading imperialist powers. This is what is meant by the Communists when they speak of the capitalist system being in decline.

But by far the most important factor in this situation has yet to be mentioned. A vast area of the earth—a sixth—comprising the nations of the former Russian Empire has broken away from the capitalist-imperialist world and formed a Union of Workers' Republics. This means that the capitalist system is challenged by the rise of a new system on top of the difficulties within itself.

These are the reasons why the Communists speak not only of the period of capitalist decline, of world economic crisis, *but of "the crisis of the capitalist system itself."*

The present economic crisis in which Ireland is deeply involved takes place therefore not as the crisis of old, in conditions of growing capitalism, but on the basis of a general crisis of the entire capitalist system.

This is why the struggle for wages, work, and maintenance raises the issue of Communism, which is the capitalist way of saying that the workers are threatening the destruction of capitalist rule.

The relation between the economic struggle of the workers for

bread and the battle of the capitalists to preserve their system at the workers' expense was illustrated in the recent struggle of the Belfast relief workers. Here an economic struggle of 2,000 workers for increased scales of relief with the Poor Law Guardians and Municipal Council brought on a general class conflict between the working class and the entire capitalist State.

The capitalists have two chief ways of overcoming the economic crisis—by economies at the workers' expense and by the struggle with other States for a bigger share in the plunder of the world's peoples. The first manifests itself in the capitalists' economy drive against the workers' wages and social insurance. The second in the increasing trade rivalries, tariff wars and the drive to new armed conflicts.

In Southern Ireland the policy of economy at the expense of the workers was responsible for getting the Free State set on its feet after 1922. Led by the Cosgrave Government, the Southern capitalists smashed down the standard of all social services—unemployment insurance, old age pensions—reduced the salaries and wages in all public services, rationalised industry on the railways and in the factories by getting more work done with less workers; reduced wages in every industry and occupation. This was the capitalists' road to the establishment of their Free State in Ireland. This is the capitalist way of staving off the collapse of their system—the placing of the burdens of the economic crisis on the workers' backs.

From the foregoing it will be clear why the capitalists, through their Press and other institutions, howl so frantically about the "Communist menace" when confronted with the slightest stir among the unemployed, a strike, or any other manifestation of discontent among the workers. The fight of the workers to live is in conflict with the fight of the capitalist system to live. The hollowness of the capitalist propaganda that the Communists are "merely using" the workers' struggle for existence to further "an attack on the socialist (capitalist) order" is here exposed. Every penny won in a wage struggle, every extra loaf won by the unemployed workers is a blow delivered at a system whose continued existence depends on its ability to drive down the existing standards of living of the working masses. The fight for bread therefore leads the workers to the policy of the Communists—the fight against capitalism and for an Irish Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

And now the national independence struggle. How does it come that this ancient struggle of the Irish people for their right to rule their own country brings against it the wrath of Press and pulpit as the most dangerous "Communist menace", a threat to civilization, religion and the family. This aspect has been dealt with in the first chapter, but it is necessary to give more illustrations here in the light of our survey of the situation of world capitalist-imperialism as a whole.

The forcing of economic concessions by the workers and poor farmers from the capitalists is, as we have seen, a blow against the capitalist system. The capitalists are not in a position to grant concessions without danger to the "social order." They are also at times

unable to resist the granting of concessions without danger to the "social order." Similarly in the case of the national struggle for freedom. This struggle menaces the whole imperialist system. British imperialism can ill afford concessions to Ireland or any of its subject States and Colonies. The Irish national fight is therefore a menace to the social order (read capitalism) in England itself. By weakening the British ruling class it assists the British working class in its fight against the capitalists, stimulates the forces of social revolution in England itself, and paves the way for the British workers' advance to power and the establishment of a Workers' Republic over the grave of British imperialism on its own hearthstone. But to endanger the capitalist fabric in England leads in its turn to similar effects in Ireland—leads not to an independent capitalist Ireland but to an independent workers' Ireland. This is one reason why many who supported or sympathised with the national fight in the past are now howling against it as a "red menace". These Irish ladies and gentlemen deserve a certain amount of credit. They see or feel, or both, what many good Irish revolutionary fighters have yet to learn—that the national fight is directly linked with the issue of social revolution in both islands.

But the main reason for the national fight assuming a deep red colour to the capitalists and their propaganda hacks and hirelings lies in the position of the classes in Ireland, economically and politically.

The economic interests of the great bulk of Irish capitalism are bound up with the maintenance of the Empire. From Southern Ireland alone over £200,000,000 of Irish capital is invested abroad, the greater part in Great Britain and the colonies. Normally these investments brought into Dublin in interest annually over £10,000,000!

This is what is called "invisible exports," or money received for which nothing was exported. In this we see a section of the wealthy in Ireland very directly interested in the maintenance of the Empire. The international "Red Menace" is something of more than moral or academic interest to this section of the "Irish people." This interest of the Irish investing capitalists in foreign lands will enable the Irish workers and farmers better to appreciate the full significance of the "symbol" of the Oath and the link of the Crown in the two Governor-Generals.

English capitalism is equally interested in the direct economic sense in maintaining Ireland in the Empire. According to statements made recently by the Free State Finance Minister, upwards of £50,000,000 of English capital is invested in the Twenty-six Counties. In insurance, railways, shipping, there are huge British capitalist interests. All this, not to speak of the British financial interests in the north and the direct extraction of tribute in the form of land annuities and other payments from the Free State.

These, however, are not the main ties which bind Ireland, while she is ruled politically and economically by the capitalists, to the Empire. The entire banking system is tied to that of Britain. The Irish financial barons have deemed it wiser not to toy with a separate currency, but to remain linked to the Bank of England. Despite the collapse of the

pound, the financial crisis in Britain and all the talk of Fianna Fail about breaking with the British currency, no move is made in this direction. Financial capital in Ireland stands with British imperialism and shares its difficulties as well as its loot.

The brewing and distilling interests, the biscuit manufacturers, the big commercial houses importing British goods, and, last but not least, the cattle export interests—all these sections of Irish capitalism are financially interested in the maintenance of the capitalist system in Ireland based on the present connection with Great Britain. These interests cannot do without the Irish worker and working farmers to exploit nor without the co-operation of the British bourgeoisie in the work of exploiting them. A burglar needs, not only a place and material to rob, but an accomplice who will dispose of the loot.

Because of this economic and political interlocking, the native capitalists acquiesce in the military and naval domination of the Irish nation—a domination expressed in the harbours at Cobh, Lough Swilly, etc. – which maintains Ireland as a war base for Britain.

The national struggle is thus in the stage when the great bulk of the capitalists have passed from opposition to imperialism, from sympathetic toleration of the national struggle, or benevolent neutrality, to the stage of active and violent opposition to every attempt at national advance.

It may be argued that the big capitalists were always against the national movement. In the case of the big imperialist interests (the "ascendancy") this is true. But before 1921 all the "national" bourgeois groups were in one form or another in opposition to the imperialists. Martin Murphy and his newspapers were championing Dominion status. True, Easter Week found this section against the insurrectionists. But Murphy and all he spoke on behalf of gave (albeit vacillating) support to Griffith and the Right Sinn Fein Wing of the movement against the old Nationalist Party. The Treaty finally brought the imperialist ascendancy group (financiers, brewers, etc.), the interests represented by the *Independent,* and the smaller manufacturers represented by Griffith and Sinn Fein, into coalition with the imperialists against the national movement now relying for sole support on the masses of farmers, lower middle class and industrial workers.

Since then there has been a regrouping among the classes. The smaller manufacturers have "broken" with the big capitalist. They have been disappointed by the Treaty which they found to serve only the interests of finance and big exporting capital. They have passed into constitutional opposition under the leadership of de Valera whose party, with its high protective tariffs, better serves their interests. The position of all sections of the capitalists now stands:– Big capitalists—active opposition to the national struggle. Smaller "national" capitalists—constitutional opposition to imperialism. Big capitalism (Cosgrave) leads the fight against the national movement. Small capitalism (de Valera) refuses to lead a resolute fight against imperialism. The working class and working farmers stand in opposition to all sections of Irish capitalism in the fight for complete independence and in defence of

their own class interests.

The further progress of the fight for national liberation is therefore bound up with the question: "Which class is going to lead the struggle?" And this in turn raises the issue: "Which class will rule in an independent Ireland?" The coalition of the big capitalists' interests (financial, manufacturing, and industrial), led by Cosgrave with imperialism; the hesitations and capitulations are compromises of the small capitalist and middle class generally, led by de Valera, give the answer. Only the working class in alliance with the masses of the farmers can lead the national struggle to the end. The struggle for national freedom leads inevitably to an Irish Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

This is why the Irish capitalist class and all their servants on platform, press and pulpit see in the national fight, quite correctly, the dreaded (for them) spectre of Communism.

Classes and Political Parties

"Only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland," wrote James Connolly.

Classes are powerless without organisation and leadership; capitalists and landlords equally with the workers and peasant farmers. The various kinds of class organisations can be roughly divided into two—economic organisations and political organisations. Both these forms or organisation are equally necessary to the classes.

Take the capitalists. How are they organised? First of all they have their employers' associations and chambers of commerce, their trade unions so to speak. The employers in the building industry are grouped together in the Master Builders' Federation. There are federations of shipbuilding employers and factory owners, and merchants are organised in each city and town in chambers of commerce. They are all united in national employers' federations, etc. These organisations serve to bring together the capitalist class as a whole in opposition to the working class. Through such organisations the individual interests of particular capitalists and groups and the sectional interests of separate branches of industry and localities are co-ordinated and subordinated to the general requirements of the class as a whole.

These are the economic organisations of the employers. Their chief function is to conduct the struggle for higher profits by reducing wages, speeding up, lengthening hours and resisting demands for wage increases and better conditions of labour by the workers.

The workers have also their economic organisations—trade unions, unemployed organisations, tenants' leagues. The workers are organised in numerous (far too numerous) trade union societies: labourers, craftsmen, clerks, etc. These are drawn together in such bodies as trades and workers' councils and nationally in the Trades Union Congress. The function of these economic organisations of the workers is to defend the daily interests, wages, hours, conditions of labour, and, in the case of the unemployed, relief and social insurance against the employers. That the present labour reformist leadership of the major part of the

trade union movement does not carry out these functions does not disprove that these are the functions for which such organisations were formed by the workers.

Among the farmers there are similar organisations. The capitalist farmers (big ratepayers and ranchers) have their Irish and Ulster Farmers' Union and a multiplicity of leagues, while the working farmers are attempting to develop organisation in alliance with the town workers in Working Farmers' Committees.

These separate organisations of workers and employers are the most elementary forms of class organisation, the A.B.C. so to speak. They include and are open to all who have specific economic interests in common—rent, interest and profit in the case of the capitalists; and wages, conditions of labour, social insurance, and the fight against rents in the case of the workers and working farmers. They include the most backward and the most advanced members of the given class, irrespective of political or religious opinions.

The highest form of class organisation, the X.Y.Z., is the political party. Politics are concentrated economics. Normally in every capitalist country each of the chief classes have their own political parties. In Ireland the big capitalists are led by the Cumann na nGaedheal in the Free State, and by the Unionist Party in the north. The smaller manufacturers and middle class generally are represented by Fianna Fail and the National League (Devlin). The farming population, because it is divided into different classes, capitalist farmers and working farmers, and because of the isolated and scattered character of agricultural economy in contrast to the highly centralised forces of the capitalists and the workers, cannot form a permanent, stable, independent political party. The big farmers have repeatedly attempted to form a political party to advance their distinct interests, but it would only function as an arm of the Cumann na nGaedheal, to be afterwards amalgamated with it. An important conclusion is to be drawn from this, viz., that it is the big centralised capitalists (bankers, industrialists, rail and shipping interests, etc.) who lead, politically, the capitalist farmers of the country.

Similarly in the case of the working farmers. They cannot act, politically, independently. They must act politically in alliance with one or the other chief classes. At present their alignment is, in the main, with the middle class party of de Valera. But the appearance of Working Farmers' Committees and the struggle over mortgages, annuities and taxes indicate that the working farmers are finding that their true class interests lie in alliance with the urban workers.

The Labour Party is a party of the working class in name, but it represents the interests and viewpoint of the higher permanent officials of the trade unions, and a very small layer of comparatively privileged workers, civil servants, and traders. It supports any and every section of the capitalists in turn. In the political field it served the interests of Anglo-Irish imperialists (Cosgrave) against the Republican movement. It now supports the Fianna Fail Party against the Cosgrave imperialists. The Northern section pursues the same policy. One section represented

by Midgley talks imperialist-labour, another section represented by McMullen plays a "National" role. In the economic field it is the same. The railway capitalists are supported against the road capitalists, or the manufacturers against the financiers. The only class not supported by the Labour Party is the working class.

The Labour Party's declared policy differs in no way fundamentally from that of the orthodox capitalist parties. Recently the Labour Party leaders complained that the Fianna Fail Party had "stolen their programme."

This review of Irish politics brings out that the only class without a political party in Ireland is the working class, "the incorruptible inheritors," in Connolly's words, "of the fight for freedom in Ireland." In the highest form of class organisation, the political, the workers are without leadership. This means that the Irish working class is being dragged politically in the wake of the middle classes. But the working class, as the present position and all past history proves, and as Connolly's teachings make clear is the one class in Ireland which can lead the national struggle of the whole toiling population through to the end, to an independent, united Ireland. Therefore the task confronting the Irish workers is to break with the middle class parties and politics and build their own independent working class political party to lead the struggle for national and social emancipation. This raises the question which the *Irish Workers' Voice* and the Revolutionary Workers' Groups have been raising before the Irish workers for a considerable time, of the organisation of the revolutionary workers in an Irish Communist Party.

The Irish Communist Party

The organisation of the Irish workers' party, the Communist Party of Ireland, is the only consistent answer of the Irish workers to the situation now facing them. The capitalist system is heading to collapse throughout the world. It is ruining the masses of the Irish people, depriving them of work, wages, and land. The working class and working farmers are the only classes in Ireland faithful to the Irish national cause, and these classes are without political leadership in the form of a powerful revolutionary class party. The organisation of the Communist Party is the burning need, and it will work for these classes.

What are the objects and tasks of such a party? These have been outlined by the Irish Revolutionary Workers' Groups, and can be briefly stated as follows:

1. To lead the struggle of the Irish people for complete separation from the British Empire, and the establishment of an Irish Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

2. To wage a revolutionary class struggle against Irish capitalism, north and south, which is the social basis for British imperialism within the country.

3. To abolish the present division of the country, resulting from imperialist domination and Irish capitalist betrayal, and to establish a

Workers' and Farmers' Government for all Ireland.

The immediate tasks are:—

1. To win to membership of the Party all militant workers in the different industries, organised in trade unions and the revolutionary national movement. To build the Party from the foremost fighters in the Irish working class.

2. To win over in the course of the daily struggle of the workers and the national independence fight against British imperialism and by intensive agitation and propaganda of the revolutionary working class principles the majority of the Irish workers to support for the policy and aims of the Irish Communist Party.

3. To conduct a persistent struggle against the pro-imperialist political parties of Cosgrave and Craigavon and their allies. To win the working masses under the influence of the Fianna Fail Party to the policy of revolutionary struggle against British imperialism and away from parliamentary national reformism. This demands a ruthless exposure of the compromising policy of Fianna Fail in the national struggle and its capitulation to the ranchers and bankers and its socially reactionary policy towards the Irish workers and working farmers.

4. To fight for the elimination of all reformist labour influence in the trade unions, and for the development of a forward rank-and-file leadership in the factories and unions to replace the present anti-working class bureaucracy.

The Workers' and Farmers' Republic would take immediate measures along the following lines:—

1. Nationalisation without compensation of all landed estates and big ranches, and their division among landless labourers and small farmers, or, where this is not feasible or desired, the organisation of State farms.

2. Nationalisation without compensation of big industry, such as railways, insurance companies, breweries, linen and engineering.

3. Confiscation of the property of all national traitors, and imperialist British interests; deprivation of political rights of these interests.

4. Centralisation of credit and finance in the hands of the Workers' State by means of a national bank with State capital and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.

5. Concentration of the means of transport in the hands of the nation.

6. Complete liberty of conscience in matters of religion; the right of all to hold and practise any beliefs without interference. To this end the Workers' and Farmers' Republic will abolish, where existing, all privileges attaching to any particular religious faith, and all disabilities imposed because of religious persuasion.

7. The Workers' and Farmers' Republic will establish free education, primary and university; entrance to the latter to be by merit. Abolition of denominational education in the primary schools, the chief weapon of the bourgeoisie in perpetuating sectarian animosities and divisions among the Irish people. Popular control of education.

8. Abolition of the present legal system and the establishment of

workers' courts of justice.

9. The present parliamentary system of Government to be abolished, and legislative and administrative functions to be conducted through committees of workers, farmers and members of professional groups elected on the basis of occupation.

This is the Communist way out of imperialism's shackles to a new Ireland. This is the working class road to the elimination of capitalist robbery and wage-slavery, to the ending of all oppression of man by man, to the banishment of unemployment and insecurity, to the disappearance of the palace and the poorhouse, to the ending of national and social oppression for ever.

In place of the old capitalist society rent asunder with the division of its warring classes, the free Ireland of the future will be built on the principle of association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

To the accomplishment of this great task the Irish revolutionary workers' movement calls the manhood and womanhood of Ireland's workers and farmers.

WHY A COMMUNIST PARTY?

International Significance of Name of Party of Revolutionary Working Class

The manifesto calling the inaugural congress which will launch the Communist Party of Ireland, is published this week. The party meets the immediate need of the Irish working class for a revolutionary organisation to lead them in their everyday struggles for wages, working conditions, relief and better housing, and, in the course of these battles, to prepare them for the final struggle to overthrow imperialism and capitalism and establish a Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

The need for a revolutionary political party is recognised by all militant fighters in working class and national movements, but there are still many who ask "Why must this party be a *Communist Party*? Why such an insistence on the name rather than on the programme and policy of the party?"

Programmes and policies are more important than names, but names have also their significance. What particular significance has the name "Communist Party" that makes it essential that this must be the name of the revolutionary workers' party in Ireland?

In the working class movement, especially since the World War, two main tendencies have clearly distinguished themselves, one from the other, within the working class movement. One group, covered by such names as Socialist Parties, Labour Parties (including the Irish Labour Party), Social Democratic Parties, Independent Labour Parties, and afiliated to or accepting the leadership of the Second (Socialist) International, state in their programmes that the working class can win economic emancipation and relief from all their present hardships, low wages, unemployment, and semi-starvation standards of living, by using the ordinary parliamentary machinery in the various countries, capturing control of it by winning the majority of seats in the parliament and then proceeding to pass such laws as will cure all their ills.

In simple words, they say that the employers, the capitalist class, who live by the exploitation of the workers, will allow the working class peacefully to take control of the State, **abolish capitalism, and deprive the owners of property, the drawers of rent, interest and profit of their present idle, parasitic, luxurious existence, and force them to go to work like any ordinary working man or woman.**

Therefore, such parties declare that the workers do not need revolutionary political parties; they only require parliamentary parties, electoral machines, with which to contest elections, and thus elect Labour members to parliament who will act as opposition parties to

the governing parties of the employers, of the capitalist class as a whole, and while awaiting the time when they will have a parliamentary majority and be able to take over the state machine, will strive to "improve" capitalism by partial improvements or reforms.

The second group has only one name in every country in the world – the Communist Party, affiliated to and accepting the leadership of the Communist International. This group declares that the present system of society is declining and at present on the verge of collapse throughout the world.

They cite the fact that it has already been swept away in one-sixth of the earth – in the Soviet Union; that there are 50,000,000 unemployed men and women in the world, for whom the capitalist class cannot provide work; the savage, world-wide attacks that are being made on wages, unemployed relief, and the general living standards of the working class in a desperate effort to bolster up this crumbling system of capitalism; that the capitalists themselves in the face of economic crisis which has shaken their system of exploitation and wage-slavery to the foundations have been forced in many countries to do away with the system of parliamentary government and institute a reign of blood, terror against the workers as in Italy, Poland, Germany and other countries.

They declare that this critical condition of capitalism which has existed since the World War makes it impossible for the workers any longer to win concessions by parliamentary struggle, as done in the pre-war years, when capitalism was developing and could afford to grant improvements to the workers.

The capitalist class can ill afford to allow the workers any concessions; on the contrary, they must struggle with all their power to deprive the workers of those concessions which they won in the past, or otherwise the collapse of capitalism will be hastened.

The Communists declare that the only way in which the workers can win concessions or defeat attacks on their living standards is by mass struggle, by strike action and by a direct political struggle against the capitalist State machine, only utilising parliament to expose capitalism and its State apparatus; by a struggle to win political power in the country, and destroying the State machine of the capitalist, set up a workers' State, and using that State power to destroy the economic and financial power of the capitalists, build up a system based on workers' ownership of the land, factories, mines, ships, railways, banks, etc., and thus abolish unemployment, low wages, bad housing and privation.

In short, the workers can only win power by a social revolution against the power of the capitalists and not by winning seats in parliament; they can only abolish hunger and want not by using the present State machine, but by destroying it and setting up a workers' State, a workers' dictatorship which will prevent the capitalist class organising again to defeat and overthrow the workers and restore capitalism.

This is what the name "Communist Party" signifies. Not the winning

of elections in order to build a parliamentary opposition and childishly wait in the hope of the capitalists peacefully handing over their factories, banks, land, etc., but by the militant struggle of the workers to carry them through a workers' revolution and smash the economic and political powers of the exploiters.

To reject the name "Communist Party" is to reject this revolutionary policy and to accept the policy of reformism and the role of a parliamentary opposition; it means to deny that the capitalist system is collapsing (despite all the facts) but is only changing and developing to the point where it will automatically, and with the aid of a parliamentary majority, transform itself into a workers' system of society.

It is a choice between the suicidal policy of belief in the peacefulness and good nature of the capitalists and the policy of active and persistent defence of the workers' every-day interests and of militant, revolutionary struggle to smash the exploiters, take away their power and build a workers' State. Such is the main, the chief political significance of the name "Communist Party."

But this revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism is not confined to one country. It is world-wide, because capitalism is world-wide. The struggle in Ireland is directly affected by the struggles abroad, especially in England and America. Therefore the struggles of the workers in each country must be co-ordinated and linked together, thus increasing their power and ability to fight. The policy of the international working class movement must be a common revolutionary policy with adaptations to meet the particular needs of each country, and the struggles, victories and defeats in each country with their valuable lessons for all sections of the movement must be studied and applied.

There must be international organisation of the workers' struggle just as there is national organisation. If we reject the reformist policies of those parties affiliated to the Socialist International, we must also reject that international organisation.

If we accept the policy of the Communist Parties, we must accept their international organisation – the Communist International. It is the leader of the militant struggle of the workers the world over, in every country, including the only section of the working class which has yet been victorious – the workers and peasant farmers of the Soviet Union.

Not to take the name "Communist Party" and thereby affiliate with the Communist International is to cut adrift from the vanguard of the international working class, from the victorious workers of the Soviet Union, and from the millions of workers and peasants in the colonies of the imperialist powers who, under the leadership of the Communist International, are fighting to overthrow world imperialism.

But the name "Communist Party" stands for even more than these vital principles – revolutionary struggle, working-class dictatorship, and international leadership, unity and policy. It also signifies that such a party is based on certain organisational principles, which have a definite political importance.

The Communist Party is the vanguard of the working class, the most class conscious, most militant and most self-sacrificing members accepting and carrying out a definite programme and policy, and bound together by discipline and unity of thought and action.

It is not a conglomeration like other political parties; such as the Labour Party, which through its affiliated membership includes the most advanced as well as the most backward workers, thereby weakening the whole body. It is not a party in which diverse political views can be held and different lines of tactics and strategy can be followed.

No! The Communist Party is disciplined, unified and pledged to a unified programme and policy, which must be accepted and operated by all members, and basing itself on organised groups (factory cells) in factories, railway shops, docks, mines and workshops, the centres of working class strength, is directly and intimately connected with the workers' struggles, their every mood and spirit. It is thus able to face up to all situations, meet all developments on the political and economic situations, and, having worked out its tactics on the basis of its general revolutionary policy, can then move forward as one man, as the highest expression of working class power – unified, conscious organisation imbued with revolutionary spirit.

Finally, to discard the name "Communist Party" at the present moment in Ireland, would not only be politically incorrect, not only a failure to understand the whole immediate, political and economic situation and the tasks facing the Irish working class, but it would also be moral and political cowardice. To discard that name in the face of the present barrage of slander, lies and filth that have been poured out on the Communist Movement and on the Soviet Union would be to retreat in the face of the bitterest enemies of the Irish working class.

It would mean desertion of the whole international struggle of the revolutionary workers throughout the world. Here it must be clearly stated that the several attempts that are being shyly made to establish "revolutionary working class political parties" under other names are definitely expressions of this retreat in the face of the enemy, **where they are not definite attempts to head off the workers' advance towards the Communist Party by dangling a "political carrot" in front of their noses in the hope that they will bite at it and thus pass-by the Communist Party.**

The Communist Party of Ireland will be established by the Irish workers. Neither political unclarity nor Labour and national reformism can stop it, nor moral and political cowardice. The acceptance by militant Irish workers of the name "Communist Party" is the expression of their understanding of the political and economic tasks which face them and of their determination to fulfil them. Not to have faith in the acceptance by Irish workers of that name is to lack faith in the ability and courage of the Irish workers to win their own economic and national liberation.

JIM LARKIN, JUN.
IRISH WORKERS' VOICE
11, MARCH, 1933

THE CONSTITUENT CONGRESS OF THE IRISH COMMUNIST PARTY

The decision of the Irish Communists, organised in the Revolutionary Workers' Groups, to hold a congress on May 27th for the establishment of the Communist Party of Ireland is of great importance. The Communist Party of Ireland continues the revolutionary traditions of the Irish proletariat as represented by Jim Connolly and the heroic Irish Citizens' Army, but benefiting from the teachings of Lenin, on the seventeenth anniversary of the Easter uprising, the Irish proletariat organises its own independent Party for the struggle for the overthrow of the Irish bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and leading the working farmers shall construct a socialist society, which will lead to freedom from all exploitation by capitalism and English imperialism.

The bloody suppression of the Easter uprising of 1916 by British imperialism deprived the Irish proletariat of its revolutionary leadership, and paved the way for the dominance in the leadership of the workers' movement of the most shameless opportunists and imperialist agents. After the defeat of the uprising these opportunist bureaucrats of the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress, showed their real anti-working-class policy by more openly sabotaging the workers' struggles against the imperialist war, and during the national revolutionary war against British imperialism betrayed the dockers and railwaymen who refused to transport British troops and munitions. Shameless betrayal of the economic struggles of the workers was accompanied by treachery to the national struggle for independence by supporting the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 which established the Irish Free State. They were rewarded by senatorial appointments for their support of the savage executions and terror against the revolutionary Irish Republican Army in the civil war against the Free State. These "Socialist" leaders during the past ten years have shown themselves to be the most reliable agents of the capitalists in their attack of the working-class, and the cringing flunkeys of British imperialism in the Free State.

The Irish Communist Party which was represented at the Second World Congress of the Comintern, succumbed to the welter of confusion into which the masses were thrown, following the establishment of the Free State and the suppression of the civil war against it. The struggle against the opportunist trade union bureaucrats led by Jim Larkin, senior, on his return to Ireland in 1923, led to a split in the trade unions and the isolation of the revolutionary workers. The Irish Workers' League which he formed, had all the appearance of developing into a Communist Party, but because the leadership were unable to pursue a consistent proletarian revolutionary policy, it fell into the

wake of national reformism and lost its following among the revolutionary workers.

The Irish Republican Army cannot mobilise the workers and poor farmers for the struggle for social and national emancipation because its aim is the establishment of a bourgeois republic. The growing radicalisation of the masses keeps the petty-bourgeois I.R.A. leadership continuously wavering between reformist demands on behalf of the toiling population and support of the national reformist Fianna Fail Party of De Valera. Such a position is typical of petty-bourgeois revolutionary republicanism, but it is incapable either of mobilising the masses for the defence against the capitalist offensive and the struggle against capitalism, or waging a consistent struggle for national independence. Such a struggle can only be waged by a Party absolutely independent of the bourgeoisie, basing itself on the revolutionary proletariat as the leader in the struggle of the masses against capitalist exploitation and national oppression. Among the proletarian and poor farmer elements in the I.R.A., this is more and more being recognised and there is a growing tendency to seek a united front with the R.W.G., and many of them are joining the R.W.G. and taking a definite stand for the organisation of the Irish Communist Party.

The consistent struggle for the formation of the Irish Communist Party has been carried on by the Revolutionary Workers' Groups, and its weekly paper, *The Workers' Voice* (which, unfortunately is still weak), since 1930. During this time there has been a growth of membership and influence of the R.W.G. in the struggle against the social-reformism of the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy on the one hand, and against national reformism on the other. "The Communist menace" in Ireland has been attacked by all the forces of the bourgeoisie. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches "ex-communicated" Communism, and the Catholic Church in the Free State organised pogroms against the Communists, and against the Kilkenny miners a counter-revolutionary united front of the clergy and the trade union bureaucrats has been formed to wreck the militant miners' union which secured better conditions for the miners by struggle under Communist leadership. In October, 1931, the R.W.G., the *Workers' Voice* and the F.S.U., and I.L.D., were outlawed by the Cosgrave Government under its Coercion Act. De Valera especially attacked Communism in the recent election campaign to put forward his party as a substitute for a Communist Party under the slogan of "Against pagan capitalism for a new Christian social system." The campaign to choke *The Workers' Voice* is so widespread that the latter continues only because of the determined support of the revolutionary workers. This support on the part of the R.W.G. is evidence of the growing influence of the movement among the workers and small farmers for the formation of the I.C.P.

The attacks against the R.W.G. organised by the Irish bourgeoisie in order to prevent the mobilisation of the revolutionary vanguard of the Irish proletariat for the formation of the I.C.P. did not prevent the R.W.G. from participation in the struggle of the workers against

the capitalist offensive. The combination of the struggle for the formation of the I.C.P. with the everyday struggles of the workers against the capitalist attack on their wages, hours, conditions, etc., and against unemployment and for social insurance, in defence of the small farmers being evicted for non-payment of land annuities, mortgages, etc., was a living necessity in order to rally around the revolutionary vanguard, the R.W.G., and to show the masses in deeds that the Communists were devoted to the struggle for the defence of the interests of the workers and the working farmers.

The R.W.G. have participated, and in some cases take over the leadership, of the economic struggles of the workers and the unemployed. In the first place we must put the great struggle of the Belfast unemployed last October, where the struggle was carried on by street battles between the workers and the police, and witnessed the greatest solidarity of the hitherto divided Protestant and Catholic workers fighting side by side against their common enemy. Similarly in Dublin and elsewhere, the R.W.G. organised the unemployed and forced concessions from the Government. In the strikes of the building workers, textile workers, miners, railwaymen the R.W.G. played a big role. The strike of the Kilkenny miners was only successful because of the long preparations of the R.W.G. and its correct leadership of the struggle and the formation of the Kilkenny Miners' Union.

The R.W.G. has popularised its programme for the small farmers, openly declaring that the fight of the farmers is bound up with the whole question of the struggle against capitalist exploitation and for national independence, and making demands which lead to the revolutionary solution of the abolition of land annuities squeezed from the farmers, the demand for no evictions, and the struggle for confiscation and distribution of the estates and large ranches to the small farmers and landless, abolition of debts of small farmers, state credits for small farmers, and moratorium for middle farmers facing bankruptcy owing to the capitalist crisis. The R.W.G. established contact in the country districts and has led farmers' struggles against evictions for non-payment of land annuities ordered by the Cosgrave Government, and for the defence of Jim Gralton who has been ordered to be deported by the De Valera Government.

But in spite of these successes which the R.W.G. have to their credit, such as the leadership of the workers' struggles against the capitalist offensive, and to some extent among the working farmers they have not been able to establish themselves organisationally among these workers and working farmers; to win them for the I.C.P. Even in the great Belfast struggle, where the R.W.G. had thousands following its leadership and many became members, the R.W.G. has not achieved the organisational results it should have. This should alarm the whole R.W.G. to concentrate all energy on the task of founding the I.C.P. in the factory, there we can find the forces with which to conquer our exploiters, and only there can be found the basis for the building of the I.C.P. and to protect our Party. Only in the revolutionary forces of the proletariat, linked and organised through the Communist Party,

can the proletariat lead the whole toiling mass (including the working farmers) in the struggle against capitalism which equally exploits the workers and farmers.

The organisation of the revolutionary vanguard of the Irish proletariat into the I.C.P. is the first essential step toward winning the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The R.W.G. has put forward, as its main aim, the struggle for an Irish Workers' and Farmers' Republic, i.e., for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this respect the Irish Communists must remember the words of Lenin:

> "The class which has seized political power has done so knowing that it has seized power *for itself alone*. This is implicit in the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. When we speak of the dictatorship of a class, we do not mean anything at all unless we mean that this class consciously takes all political power into its own hands, and does not fool either itself or others by any verbiage about 'a national authority, elected by universal suffrage, and consecrated by the will of the whole people.' "

In a country such as Ireland, where the proletariat itself has been imbued with nationalist ideas for so long, it is essential to emphasise this point, and keeping in mind the great mass of petty farmers in Ireland it is necessary to heed the statement of Comrade Stalin in his *Problems of Leninism*:

> "This must not be taken to mean that the power of this one class, the class of the proletarians, (who do not and cannot share this power with any other class), can get along without an alliance with the labouring and exploited masses of other classes. On the contrary, the proletarians need such an alliance for the realisation of their aims."

Further, in his pamphlet, *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*, Comrade Stalin writes :

> "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a class alliance of the proletariat with the labouring masses of the peasantry; an alliance entered into for the overthrow of capitalism, for bringing about the final victory of Socialism ; an alliance formed upon the understanding that, within it, the leadership belongs to the proletariat."

Without firmly grasping these fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism it would be impossible for the constituent Congress of the I.C.P. to understand that revolutionary alliance of the Irish proletariat with the masses of petty producers, which alone shall make possible the freeing of Ireland from the grip of British imperialism and the establishment of the Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

Such a revolutionary aim requires the establishment of a Communist Party steeled in Bolshevik discipline which will enable the Party to win the confidence and support of the working-class which in turn shall lead the whole of the exploited. Regarding the establishment of such a Party, Lenin wrote :

> "How is discipline maintained within the revolutionary Party of the proletariat? What controls the discipline, and what strengthens it?

First of all, there is the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard, its devotion to the revolution, its self-control, its self-sacrifice, its heroism. Secondly there is the capacity of the proletarian vanguard for linking itself with, for keeping in close touch with, for to some extent amalgamating with, the broad masses of those who labour, primarily with the proletarian masses, but also with the non-proletarian masses of those who labour. Thirdly, we have the soundness of the vanguard's political leadership, the soundness of its political strategy and tactics—with the proviso, that the broad masses must become convinced *by their own experience* that the leadership, the strategy, and the tactics are sound."

The I.C.P., organising into its ranks the vanguard of the Irish proletariat can only become "the guide, the leader, the teacher of the proletariat, on the above basis" (Stalin)

Having clearly stated the aim of the I.C.P. as the organisation of the proletarian struggle against capitalism for socialism, having clearly defined the task of the proletariat for the seizure of political power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat (the Workers' and Farmers' Republic), and tasks of the I.C.P. for the winning of the majority of the Irish proletariat, the Irish Communists must clearly define their attitude to the toiling masses, and convince them not only in words but in deeds, that their path to social and national freedom lies in revolutionary alliance in the struggle for socialism with the proletariat, against the Irish bourgeoisie and British imperialism for the Workers and Farmers' Republic. Therefore, the Irish Communists must have a programme of the national and social demands of the toiling masses of the population which will convince them that only in alliance with the proletariat, led by the Communist Party, can they find a way out of their poverty and degradation in a joint struggle against capitalism, and for socialism, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A correct revolutionary Marxist-Leninist position on the question of the struggle for the national independence and unity of Ireland from British imperialism is of vital importance to the I.C.P. because, first, on this question the I.C.P. must win the Irish proletariat for the internationalist position of Marxism-Leninism, and break down the divisions erected by the bourgeoisie between the workers of Northern and Southern Ireland on this question, and really unite the Irish proletariat in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and British imperialism, and prevent them from falling into, on the one hand, the imperialist camp of a section of the Irish bourgeoise and, on the other hand, into the hands of the nationalist bourgeoisie led by De Valera. Secondly, to link up the Irish proletarian struggle with the international proletarian struggle against imperialism, and especially unite the Irish proletarian struggle with the struggle of the English workers against British imperialism; thirdly, the whole question of the proletarian leadership of the exploited farmers in a joint struggle against the bourgeoisie, for the establishment of the Workers' and Farmers' Republic is bound up with the struggle of the poor farmers against capitalist exploitation, while this is most intimately connected with the struggle for national independence.

The I.C.P. can only be considered as a serious Party, leading the proletariat in the struggle for the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, when it recognises that the struggle for national independence from British imperialism is a central question involving the unity of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, educating the proletariat in internationalism, arming them against the imperialist and nationalist bourgeoisie who seek to hold the proletariat in capitalist slavery, and aiding the proletariat in taking over the leadership of the non-proletarian masses in the struggle for social and national emancipation, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Therefore, it is necessary for the Irish Communist to especially pay attention to the words of Comrade Stalin when speaking about the tasks of Communists in an oppressed nation,

"the two fold task of the Communist who must diffuse among the workers the spirit of internationalism" . . . "the need for a struggle against the narrowness, the particularism of those socialists in oppressed lands who cannot see beyond the boundaries of the parish in which they were born, and *therefore fail to see the intimate connection between the movement for liberation of their own country and the proletarian movement in the country by which it is ruled" (Our emphasis.).*

These profound directives of Comrade Stalin are especially applicable to the situation in Ireland where the main danger is right opportunism, especially regarding the national question; to lose sight of the main task of the Party as the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat would inevitably result in our party becoming the tail end of bourgeois nationalism or sucked into the swamp of the I.R.A. and therefore losing sight of the main task of organising the proletariat as the single force which can lead the whole of the Irish masses in a consistent struggle for the unity and independence of Ireland. the revolutionary alliance of the workers and poor farmers in the struggle for socialism.

Basing itself on proletarian internationalism, and organising the proletarian struggle in this spirit, the I.C.P. must wage a bitter struggle against bourgeois nationalism no matter under which guise it hides itself, then courageously declare that the I.C.P. leading the proletarian struggle to socialism, unites the proletariat with the working masses of the farming population, and wages the most determined struggle for the unity and independence of Ireland. This requires from the I.C.P. that it must base itself on the Leninist principle that:

"The centre of gravity of the internationalist education of the workers in oppressing countries must take the form of insisting upon the right of oppressed countries to secede and set up for themselves. Short of this, there is no internationalism. We can and should regard as an imperialist and a scoundrel every socialist in an oppressing country who fails to carry on propaganda of this kind. The right to secede is axiomatic, even though, before the coming of socialism, there may not be one case in a thousand where the right can be enforced.

"On the other hand, the socialists of a small and oppressed

nation must mainly stress the second part of our general formula—the "voluntary union" of the nations. Without doing violence to his obligations as an internationalist, he may (according to circumstances, either advocate the political independence of his nation, or favour its inclusion in some neighbouring State. In all cases, however, he should fight particularism, a narrow conception of nationalism, should insist on the importance of wider issues, should favour the subordination of special interests to general interests."

The constituent Congress of the I.C.P. must examine the political and organisational mistakes and weaknesses which have been observed during the R.W.G. struggle for the foundation of the Party. Such self-criticism is necessary in order that the Irish Communists shall realise that the main danger confronting them is right opportunism. Especially in Ireland this danger expresses itself in the tendency to capitulate to national-reformism, i.e., in refusing to struggle against Fianna Fail, to win the masses for a revolutionary alliance for the joint struggle against capitalist exploitation and for national independence. The Irish Communists must recognise that because of the demagogic programme of Fianna Fail of social and national freedom, it plays the role of a social buttress for Irish capitalism among the masses. On the other hand, the right danger is also expressed in the failure to struggle against the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy, and independently lead the struggles against the capitalist offensive in spite of the class collaboration policy of the bureaucrats, to develop the struggle against their capitalist oppressors and clean the workers' movement of these capitalist agents.

Such an opportunist slogan as "nationalisation of the railways with compensation" cannot be passed over in silence because it disarms the Party in the struggle against the Social-Fascist Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy, which has precisely the same slogan. The R.W.G. must recognise that in precisely fighting such slogans they are fighting the chief danger menacing the very formation of the Irish Communist Party, because the right danger is the greatest danger for every Communist Party. From this must inevitably arise every opportunist capitulation to capitalism, which we must most strenuously fight against.

The campaign for the Constituent Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland must be more energetically waged than hitherto. There have been waverings, hesitations, even in many issues of the *Workers' Voice*, nothing has been mentioned about the foundation of the I.C.P. And in the discussion regarding the establishment of the Communist Party of Ireland, the fundamental questions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletarian-farmer alliance against capitalism and the relationship to them of the national struggle, etc., have been passed over. The campaign for the establishment of the Communist Party can only be successful if it is rooted in the masses of factory workers, among the unemployed, at the Labour Exchanges, in the workers' quarters, by explaining to them that only the Communist Party, waging a stubborn struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, and defending the interests of the workers and working farmers, by a revolutionary

alliance of the working-class and the working farmers, can finally free the whole of the toiling masses from capitalist oppression and poverty in the proletarian struggle for socialism.

The Irish proletariat, in alliance with the poor farmers, led by the Irish Communist Party, armed with Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology can organise the vanguard of the proletariat to lead the Irish working-class to the establishment of a free and independent Ireland—an Irish Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

* * * *

The formation of the Irish Communist Party is of great importance internationally; the importance of this fact is the more marked because of the millions of Irish immigrants living in Britain, the British Dominions and Colonies and the United States of America, where there are more Irish than in Ireland itself. The formation of the Irish Communist Party will deeply affect the emigrant masses and aid the Sections of the Comintern in these countries to gain recruits among them, if these Sections recognise that these immigrant Irish and their descendants still maintain a great hatred of British imperialism, and consequently are deeply interested in the struggle for the independence of Ireland. This is especially necessary because both in Britain, America, Canada and Australia, not only the socialist but also clearly bourgeois politicians pay lip service to the national struggle for liberation in Ireland in order to maintain the vast masses in their country under bourgeois domination. Therefore it is absolutely essential to adopt a correct Marxist-Leninist attitude to the question of the struggle for liberation of Ireland from British imperialism. This will supply them with the bridge with which to encourage these Irish workers today, exploited by capitalism, to join the Communist Parties and fight alongside the Communist International not only against their former national oppression, but against their present capitalist exploitation.

Lenin paid great attention to the "Irish Question" (as did Marx and Engels before him) because of the great importance of the national-liberation movement in Ireland for the proletarian socialist struggle against British imperialism, and the advance of the proletarian revolution in Europe. In many articles on the Irish situation, Lenin draws many conclusions to which the Irish Communists should pay especial attention today because they answer many of the problems confronting the C.P. of Ireland.

Basing himself on the conclusion reached by Marx and Engels that Ireland must be separated from Britain in the interests of the proletarian revolution in Britain itself, in the advance of the European proletarian revolution, Lenin drew lessons from the class struggle in Ireland which are of the greatest importance to the Irish proletariat today.

Writing regarding the Dublin general strike in 1913, Lenin characterised the offensive of the Irish capitalists against the Irish workers as follows: "The nationalist Irish bourgeoisie celebrate their 'national' victory (the Irish bourgeoisie expected to secure' Home Rule at that

time—S.McK.) their 'national coming-of-age by declaring war to the death on the Irish working-class movement."

It is of especial importance to heed this Leninist conclusion today, when the De Valera Government of National reformists, relying on their former revolutionary nationalist reputations, lead the capitalist offensive against the proletariat under the guise of creating a new Ireland," a "new social system" in the interests of the Irish capitalist offensive on the toiling masses.

In this article, "The Irish Rebellion in 1916," Lenin stigmatises those who called it a "putsch" as "either a bitter reactionary or a doctrinaire, hopelessly incapable of imagining a social revolution as a living phenomena."

In the same article he draws the conclusion that:

'We would really be a sorry band of revolutionists if we did not, during the great proletarian battle for Socialism, understand enough to utilise *every* movement of a nation against any isolated grievances which are brought about by imperialism, in the interests of a broader intensification and spread of the crisis. If we were, on the one hand, to proclaim and repeat in thousands of ways that we are against any kind of national oppression, and, on the other, to stigmatise as a "putsch" the heroic rising of the most mobile and intellectual section of some class of the oppressed nations against its oppression, then, indeed, we would have reduced ourselves to the same dull level of the Kautskians!"

In the present period in Ireland, which is witnessing a great advance in the anti-imperialist mood of the labouring masses of the population, the Irish Communists by a proper application of the above Leninist position can win them from the national-reformism of De Valera for the joint struggle with the proletariat, the struggle for Socialism.

THE CONGRESS REPORT

At the moment when all the anti-national forces, all the enemies of the workers are howling against "the menace of Communism", the vanguard of the Irish toiling masses have hurled down their class gauntlet. Over Whit week-end nearly fifty working men and women met in Dublin for the inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland.

The delegates came from the four corners of Ireland. Practically every revolutionary workers' group in the country had sent its representatives. Shipyard workers and mill girls from Belfast. Dublin's factory workers and railwaymen. Farmers owning a patch of land in Connacht. Men from "Rebel Cork". National fighters with years of devoted service to Ireland to their credit. Here were workers who in their several ways had come to understand James Connolly's call, "We must organise as a class to meet our masters and destroy their mastership"; men whom the whole course of the national struggle since 1916 had taught that the fight must be taken out of the hands of those who had betrayed it: that "the working class are the incorruptible inheritors of the national fight for liberation."

The atmosphere of the Congress was electric. In every delegate there seemed to be the realisation that he or she was participating in an event that was destined to be historic. Looking at the intent faces one thought back to that little conference in Dublin thirty-seven years ago when Jim Connolly and his gallant little band launched their Socialist Republican Party of Ireland. This Congress was evidence of the maturity and rich revolutionary experience acquired by our class since those days.

Jim Larkin, Jun., took the chair. Almost his first sentence struck the keynote of the Congress. "We meet to bring into being the General Staff of the whole struggle of the Irish workers and working farmers."

Comrade Larkin pointed out the heritage of the Party. The generations of national struggle. The rising wave of industrial battles. He showed the lesson of these industrial fights for work and wages. The Castlecomer miner's strike, for instance, was a magnificent example of the fight the workers could develop against capitalism. Here, under rank and file leadership, despite the whole efforts of the reformist Trade Unions and the local clergy on behalf of the mineowner imperialist, the miners secured an increase in wages. In the railway strike, on the other hand, there were on the surface greater possibilities of success. But a strong Trade Union and a strong section of the Irish workers lost, and wage cuts and mass dismissals were carried through.

The difference in result lay in the fact that the railway strike was conducted by Trade Union reformists who led the railwaymen to defeat and betrayal.

"These lessons must be learned," he said. "The inauguration of the Party must meet the long felt need for the development of a real leadership of the workers' struggles.

Then the closing sentences. "Let us every one dedicate ourselves today to the service of Ireland and our class. We have not an easy road to travel. It is a road that will call for self-sacrifice, perhaps the ultimate sacrifice from some of us, but we are strengthened by the invincible power of our class and by the knowledge that the final victory is with us."

Resolutions of greeting followed—to the Communist Parties of Britain Germany, France, to the American Party and its leader, William Z. Foster, son of a Fenian father, to Tom Mooney, the Irish-American Trade Union leader now in an American jail for seventeen years.

The resolution applying for affiliation to the Communist International was greeted with applause and carried unanimously.

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Sean Murray then spoke and the following is from his speech introducing the Manifesto, as reported in *The Worker's Voice*, 17/6/1933.—Series Editor

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Irish Working Class must lead the National Struggle

Our Congress is a break with the old traditions of the class fight in Ireland; it is a step from the situation in which the revolutionary working class movement consisted of scattered groups with very little central leadership.

I welcome the delegates here today. Our Congress is living proof that in this twentieth century Irish workers can break through all the barriers of sectarian bigotry and racial animosity erected for its own ends by the ruling class and can form a Society of United Irishmen. The delegates here from the four corners of Ireland—from the shipyards and linen mills of the North, the mines and factories of Kilkenny and Cork, the bleak holdings of Connacht no less than from Dublin – come to the United Irishmen of today.

The Congress proves that there is a growing consciousness of the need for a class Party of the Irish workers; it is a proof of the growth of the revolutionary movement.

Let us examine the resolutions and materials before the Congress. With what problems are we faced?

We are living in a nation that is torn asunder and ruled by British imperialism and that again and again has been betrayed by the Irish capitalists. It is clear that we must devise ways and means of breaking

the imperialist rule and uniting the revolutionary forces as a first step on the road to social emancipation. How are we to achieve this? It is necessary that we see the conditions under which the struggle is going forward. If we could not see the difficulties of our ancient foreign enemy and the differentiation at home we should be the blindest leaders of the blind.

Almost the first in our manifesto is the statement that "today revolutionary Ireland obtains a might international ally such as it never had before in all history." Britain is in difficulties. The plundering power of the British Empire is lessening. In India a tremendous revolutionary struggle is proceeding Britain is losing its place as an imperialist world power; it has to make economic concessions in order to safe-guard its military and political position; the coming war forced it to make such concessions at the Ottawa Conference. The gold standard has gone. And the crisis is not peculiar to Britain. Even the capitalists in the U.S.A. are in a bad way, and the crisis there is even more severe than in some of the countries defeated in the Great War. The supreme conflict is between the forces of the national liberation and socialist movement which will force capitalism out of existence.

The national struggle is the prime question with which we are faced in Ireland. It is necessary therefore, that we understand the stage we have reached in the struggle. If the Irish capitalists had done what they should the national question would be solved. But they also fight against the independence movement who shout loudest about nationality. We Communists are internationalists, and we are also the greatest exponents of the national independence struggle. The battles of the past prove that the Irish capitalists have deserted the national movement. They no longer even worship the past leaders of the national movement. Wolfe Tone is a "cut-throat". Emmet is denounced. As Marx once said of the French capitalists "even their own gods have deserted them."

The capitalists are against national independence. They have betrayed the struggle for liberation. They fear that the solving of the national question will also pave the way for their destruction and the building of socialism. They see clearly that the Republic will weaken the capitalists and lead to the socialist revolution.

The formation of the Communist Party of Ireland will drive forward the national revolution. This is proved by our Congress where the Ulster workers come together with the best national fighters from the South. The national struggle under the leadership of the Communists takes on a class form and makes clear to the Northern workers that the national struggle is the way to the smashing of the class power of the capitalists. The Manifesto points out that the national struggle is a class question and victory or defeat will depend upon which class is at the head of the struggle. In the past our weakness was that we did not see clearly that it was necessary to change the class leadership of the national struggle.

As far back as '98 the leaders of the United Irishmen were forced

to see that the merchants had betrayed the struggle, As Henry Joy McCracken put it: "the rich always betray the poor."

Can the peasant farmers lead the struggle?

We must conclude that they cannot. The farmers have always been under the leadership of the middle class. The farmers are not concentrated and are difficult to organise:– they are themselves divided into classes and at the present time the big farmers have come out openly on the side of the imperialists. But though the peasant farmers cannot lead they can be powerful allies of the working class, and no movement for national and social liberation can be successful that does not take into account the reserves of the revolution in the countryside.

The first word of our Manifesto is directed to the workers. It is necessary to burn into the minds of the workers that they are the only class that can lead the national struggle. We must tell the poor farmers that there is no hope of escape from poverty without an allied fight under the leadership of the workers.

Why do we proclaim that the working class alone can lead the struggle? Like the capitalists, they are concentrated in towns and factories, even though the factories in Ireland are small. And they are not held back from revolutionary struggle by small property ideas.

The Communists alone can really solve partition. Sinn Fein and the other groups, by their sectarian, anti-working class attitude, drive away the only class in the North that can unify the country. But the Communists bring together workers from Waterford and Shankill who could meet on no other basis. The national movement in the North must break away from its religious sectarian basis if it is to come to grips with British imperialism.

On the basis of our Manifesto we must proceed to recruit more and more workers into the Party and to build powerful units. We must build up a strong local and national leadership. We must have a stronger spirit of Party discipline and a loyal carrying out of decisions. I am convinced that if we succeed in doing this we shall be following the best traditions of the Irish fight for freedom. We are taking the best, the only road to the Party of the Irish working class, to national independence and to the social emancipation of the Irish toilers.

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Following his speech came the contributions of the other delegates.

The problems of breaking down sectarian and racial animosities in Belfast and welding the workers of the North into one fighting front. The problems of organisation in the scattered country districts. The rooting of the Party in the factories and workplaces of the industrial centres. Each delegate facing up to the task of translating the resolutions into life.

Then the election of a strong Central Committee to lead the Party in its vital first year, and the delegates went back to their districts, each with a strengthened faith in his class and confidence in its Party.

PREFACE

This manifesto is Irish history and modern Irish politics as interpreted by the Communist Party of Ireland. The manifesto lays down two central propositions. The first is that the main barrier to a unified and independent Irish nation is the Irish capitalist class and its dominance of the national movement. The second is that the Irish working class backed by the working farmers can alone carry the national struggle to victory. The entire work of the Irish Communist Party is based on these two propositions of the Manifesto.

The working masses of nationalist Ireland cannot take a single step in the fight for an Irish Republic without coming into conflict with the vested interests of their own capitalists, whether factory owners, graziers or financiers. In the imperialist area of the Six Counties the social demands of the workers bring them into conflict with British imperialism, as demonstrated in the great upheaval of the unemployed masses in October, 1932. To-day, in the Irish working class is joined the fight of the Irish nation for freedom and of the exploited for social emancipation from capitalism.

This manifesto is the embodiment of this combination, as James Connolly put it, "of all the forces of economic and political discontent." Its adoption by the Inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland this year marks a big step forward by the Irish working class in the creation of an independent revolutionary workers' movement.

The path from national oppression and social misery for the Irish people to the Workers' and Farmers' Republic is that of this manifesto of the Irish Communist Party.

September, 1933 **SEAN MURRAY.**

MANIFESTO OF THE IRISH COMMUNIST PARTY

IRELAND'S PATH TO FREEDOM

WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF IRELAND!

FELLOW FIGHTERS FOR IRISH FREEDOM!

Never before have conditions been so favourable for complete liberation of Ireland from English rule.

The present world economic crisis is ruining millions of workers and peasant farmers, forces of revolution unequalled in history are gathering and maturing in all countries, and the world is entering a new period of wars and revolutions. This gives revolutionary Ireland a mighty international ally such as it never had in former times.

The tremendous flood of international revolution, made up of socialist revolutions in the foremost capitalist countries, of bourgeois revolutions in the backward countries where strong relics of medieval feudalism still remain, of the risings for national independence in the colonial and semi-colonial countries—this tremendous flood of international revolution will inevitably draw the Irish people into its current, with their enormous experience of almost two centuries of revolutionary struggle.

The National Revolutionary Struggle in History

For the last 200 years the history of Ireland has been the history of the hard and stubborn fight of the Irish people for national freedom. In rising after rising the Irish people have tried to tear themselves away from English oppression and at all times the Irish people have sought to find allies in the liberation movements of other countries.

No big revolutionary event has taken place in world history without the Irish people trying to unite their national revolutionary independence movement with the international revolutionary movement. The Volunteer Movement of 1782 arose in unison with the revolutionary movement for the liberation of the American colonies which had revolted against English rule.

The 1798 rising followed on the great French Revolution. The 1848 rising was an integral part of the European revolution and was called the Chartist Movement. The 1867 rising reflected the revolutionary situation which arose all over Europe in the sixties of the last century. The 1916 insurrection was the first revolt against the imperialist war, against English Imperialism and consequently was a prologue to the

international proletarian revolution which took place in Russia in 1917.

The whole of Irish history and the experience of its revolts, prove convincingly that no successful uprising of the Irish people, and consequently, no liberation from English slavery is possible without an alliance with the international revolutionary movement. This important lesson bought with the blood of hundreds of thousands of fighters who perished heroically in the struggle for the independence of Ireland, must form the basis of the further struggle of the Irish people for their liberation from English imperialism.

The hour of the final liberation of Ireland is very near!

But who will lead the Irish people to the revolutionary liberation struggle? Which class will stand at the head of this struggle? Which class is capable of carrying this struggle to a definite finish?

Irish Capitalism Betrays the Struggle

Is the Irish capitalist class capable? The whole history of the Irish national movement proves that the capitalist class has been disloyal to the national cause, bargained and made agreements with the British Government at the expense of the interests of workers and peasant masses, time and again betrayed the struggle for freedom. Even during the 1782 Volunteer Movement—a movement led by the rising Irish capitalist class of the period—this class came to terms with the British, obtained some concessions for themselves, voluntarily disarmed their bourgeois detachments (Merchant Corps and Lawyers Corps), and started violently to disarm the detachments recruited from amongst the workers (Liberty Corps) which did not wish to lay down their arms.

In 1798 the Irish capitalists and landlords, frightened by the spirit of Jacobinism, which was more and more penetrating the revolutionary movement headed by the United Irishmen, took a direct part in the brutal suppression of the insurrection and in the literal sense of the word sold Ireland to England in a Parliament consisting of the leading capitalists and landlords for a bribe of £1,260,000 (the vote in the Irish Parliament for union with England).

In the National movement of the first half of the 18th century, O'Connell, as the leader of the right wing of the Irish capitalists and the Catholic landed gentry, made himself known as the bitterest enemy of the peasantry, whose actions against the landlords he called "agrarian crimes."

In 1824-25 he violently opposed the Trade Unions and sent the police against the Dublin workers, exhorting the police to fire on the workers who were demonstrating for the dissolution of the Union. The native capitalist class and middle class generally, through O'Connell diverted the national struggle of the people into a struggle for Catholic emancipation and later in the bourgeois Repeal Association put forward the slogan of federation under the English Crown.

The left-wing of the bourgeoisie which split away from the Repeal Association and formed the Irish Confederation, although declaring for independence, nevertheless, opposed revolutionary methods of

struggle and advocated the same strictly legal methods of O'Connell. The Confederation held back the Dublin workers after John Mitchel's arrest and when compelled to take the field sacrificed the people's revolution in the interests of private property.

The Fenian Rising of 1867 was a movement of the proletarians in the towns (factory workers, office workers, lower intellectuals and part of the rural labourers), but the leadership was in the hands of petty bourgeois intellectuals, and therefore, though the movement was directed not only towards winning political independence for Ireland but also against the landlords, bourgeoisie and the priests, there was an absence of clarity in the programme, in particular, a failure to understand the interconnection between the agrarian and the national revolutions.

The capitalist class sacrificed the national independence movement and the farmers' struggle against landlordism in return for English Liberal promises of Home Rule. Led by Redmond, Devlin, O'Brien and Healy, this class carried its treachery to Ireland to open support for the British Empire during the imperialist war of 1914-18, and together with the imperialist capitalists led by Carson came out in open hostility against the 1916 rising.

The Lessons of the Struggle

The rising of 1916 and the movement which succeeded it ending in the Treaty of 1921, and the division of Ireland into two capitalist states, has put a seal upon the national treachery of the Irish capitalists and brought out as never before the impossibility of further entrusting the conduct of the national struggle to the leadership of the Irish middle class.

It was the workers' army led by Socialists like Connolly, representing the class conscious workers of the capital, which constituted the vanguard of the insurrection. It was the representatives of the bourgeoisie, the wing led by Griffith, MacNeill and Hobson, which betrayed the insurrectionary movement on the eve of the uprising.

It was the compromising hesitations of the petty bourgeois leaders (de Valera and Co.), which resulted in handing over the leadership of the Republican Movement on the morrow of the insurrection to the bourgeois leaders who had opposed it, deserted and betrayed it. (Griffith and MacNeill).

The men who had stood by the employers in the great workers' upheavals of 1907, 1911 and 1913 (Griffith and Co.), who bitterly denounced Trade Unionism, the class struggle of the workers and Socialism, as aiding the imperialists, were the leaders of surrender to British imperialism in 1921-22.

The middle class Sinn Fein Movement was the agency by which the Irish capitalists held back the labouring masses in the anti-imperialist struggle, called off the strike of the railwaymen against the transport of British troops, which protected the landlords and ranchers and suppressed the revolutionary movement of the labourers and peasant farmers in the struggle for land. (Dail Eireann reports).

The 1921 betrayal was no accident of individual leaders being bribed

or bought by the British. It was the inevitable outcome of a struggle in which the leadership was in the hands of a class who feared that the complete triumph of the National Independence Movement would not halt at national separation but would develop into a social revolution, resulting in the overthrow of the Irish capitalist class and the establishment of a Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Republic.

The 1921 betrayal is the outcome of the treachery of the Irish capitalist class and the vacillation of the lower middle class who were incapable of leading a sufficiently resolute struggle against the Treaty capitulators to imperialism.

The rich revolutionary experience of the Irish people's fight for liberation from the English yoke gives the further lesson that Irish capitalism always betrayed the independence movement for their own selfish class interests.

The entire history of the national struggle under the leadership of the Irish capitalists is one of bargains with the English, obtaining concessions for the Irish capitalists at the expense of the people's movement for national freedom.

The class interests of the Irish capitalists are shown without question by the whole history of Ireland to be contradictory to the complete liberation of Ireland from the English yoke. The Irish capitalist class is not only incapable of being at the head of the National Independence Movement, but this movement can only be victorious through struggle against Irish capitalism.

The Peasantry and the Struggle

Are the peasant farmers capable of leading the revolutionary national struggle and carrying it to a finish?

No, they are not capable. In the history of Ireland the tenant farmers have more than once come forward as a big revolutionary force. They formed revolutionary peasant organisations (the White Boys, the Hearts of Steel, the Moonlighters, etc.), which carried on a stern struggle against the English, and Irish landlords and took a powerful part in the Independence Movement.

But like the peasants of other countries, the Irish tenant farmers were not able to rise to the level of an independent movement owing to their scatteredness, the impossibility of uniting their forces, and organising them for a planned struggle led from one centre.

The revolutionary Farmers' Movement in Ireland can become a powerful and decisive force only under the leadership of another revolutionary class which is in such conditions that it can organise its forces—only in alliance with such a class.

The experience of the 1848 rebellion, when both of these revolutionary streams united in the person of John Mitchell and Fintan Lalor, acting in sharp opposition to the capitalists and landlords, shows by what path victory is possible for the revolutionary movement in Ireland, but at the same time discloses the causes of the defeat of the 1848 rising.

Only an alliance of the proletariat and the peasants, under the leadership of the former, can produce sufficient power for the victory of the revolution.

The defeat of the 1848 rebellion is explained firstly by the fact that both classes were insufficiently conscious of their aims, with the resultant indecision during the struggle, and secondly, that the proletariat did not understand its leading role and did not stand out as an independent force in the general masses of the democratic revolution.

The Working Class Alone Can Lead the Struggle

In all uprisings the Irish workers have taken a most energetic part. The armed bands of workers (Liberty Corps), in 1784, tens of thousands of armed workers in the Society of the United Irishmen, who fought in 1798 and organised a further insurrection in 1803 under the leadership of Emmet, the rebellion of 1848, the Fenian rising in 1867, in which two-thirds were factory and office workers, the Citizen Army in the 1916 rising which consisted of workers attracted towards Socialism and Internationalism—such were the chief stages of the Irish workers' movement in the national independence struggle.

In spite of the fact that at all these stages of the national liberation movement the working class did not succeed as yet in spreading itself as an independent class force; the history of this movement shows that this class is the only revolutionary class capable of an irreconcilable struggle for national freedom, and, therefore, capable of standing at the head of this movement as its leader. The working class has become able to assert itself as an independent class force through its growing concentration in the factories and the towns, its property-less nature, and therefore its freedom from adherence to private property and its ability to move independently and exert its leadership over the other national forces.

National Liberation Leads to Social Liberation

The class interests of the proletariat drive it further than the national independence of Ireland towards the social liberation of the toiling masses—to Socialism, For the proletariat the national liberation of Ireland is an inevitable task which it will carry out on the way to Socialism.

Between the national and social liberation of the toiling masses of Ireland there is no contradiction, as is usually claimed by bourgeois politicians. On the contrary, it is just because the chief task of the proletariat is Socialism that it is capable of carrying the national fight with England to a finish.

The Irish working class will carry on the national independence struggle to the end, attaching to itself the mass of peasant farmers, so as to crush the power of resistance of the English imperialists and overcome the unreliability of the Irish capitalist class.

The Irish proletariat will bring about a socialist revolution, attaching

to itself the masses of semi-proletarians in the population, so as to break the power of resistance of the capitalists and render harmless the unreliability of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie.

At the head of the peasants for an Independent Ireland, at the head of all the toilers and the exploited for a Workers' and Farmers' Irish Republic, for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—such is the historic task given to the Irish working class by the whole of the present alignment of class forces in Ireland and the position of the Irish national independence movement as an integral part of the international revolution.

The Task of a Revolutionary Workers' Party

The Irish proletariat can carry out these historic tasks only by standing out as a political force, creating a revolutionary workers' party—the Communist Party—independent of the political parties of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.

No other class but the proletariat and no other party but the Communist Party can bring about the national and social liberation of the Irish people.

The election of de Valera to power reflects the tremendous growth of discontent among the masses, caused by the calamities brought about by the world economic crisis. The toiling masses of Ireland are rising to a new struggle. A new upsurge of the revolutionary independence movement is commencing.

The formation of the Communist Party of Ireland is an essential step in the struggle of the Irish people for independence. The weakness of the working class in the national liberation movement of the past has been the absence of a strong revolutionary class leadership in the form of a revolutionary class party. The building of a mass Communist Party of Ireland is a prime task facing the Irish working class.

But the national struggle against Britain is being directed by the Fianna Fail Party along the line of compromise, capitulation, and betrayal. The de Valera Government is utilising the revolutionary upsurge of the Irish masses for the purpose of securing economic and fiscal advantages to the capitalists and politically to remove the more nakedly imperialist features of the Treaty of surrender, such as the Oath of Allegiance.

It has shown its willingness to compromise on the issues of complete separation, the unity of the country and the disputed financial tributes. The de Valera Government has shown itself a capitalist Government, placing the interests of the Irish capitalist class above the interests of the masses of the Irish people in the struggle against England.

It has protected the imperialist capitalist interests on the railways (writing off the capital of the small investors, strengthening the position of the monopoly interests in rail and road transport through its legislation), and has proved itself the instrument of the capitalists in reducing the wages of the railwaymen and breaking their heroic strike struggle.

The de Valera Government has shown itself not a government of resolute national struggle against Britain, but a government of national compromise and the custodian of the interests of Irish capitalism in its class offensive against the Irish workers (denying unemployment insurance to the unemployed, cutting wages on relief work, reducing teachers' and lower Civil Servants' salaries).

The de Valera Government is revealing itself as an enemy of the poor farmers in the struggle against the payment of annuities, mortgages and taxes. It has conciliated with the imperialist exporting interests in agriculture by a policy of subsidies at the expense of the masses of the people. Its policy of tariffs and industrialisation is directed to the strengthening of the Irish capitalists at the expense of the Irish workers, without in any way fighting the vital interests of the imperialists in Ireland.

The National League, headed by Devlin and Healy, pursues out of office a policy of naked betrayal of the independence struggle. By means of demagogic appeals to religious prejudice it holds the nationalist masses under its influence from any serious struggle against imperialism.

The bankruptcy of petty bourgeois nationalism to lead the anti-imperialist struggle and solve the question of Irish unity is most clearly portrayed in the treacherous policy of the National League and the admission of de Valera that he "sees no solution for this problem."

Only a revolutionary class struggle against the entire capitalist class can unite the masses of the Irish workers and farmers and lead to the abolition of the imperialist border, to a united, indepedent Ireland.

The Fianna Fail Party (and its National League counterpart) has shown itself incapable of standing at the head of the mass movement for liberation. It is incapable because it is a party of National Reformism standing for the interests of the manufacturing capitalists whose opposition to British imperialism is subordinated to its fight for profits from the Irish workers.

The struggle for National independence can only be successful to the extent to which it breaks through the shackles imposed on it by the national capitalist Party of de Valera and treads the path of revolutionary struggle led by the working class with its own class party.

WORKERS OF IRELAND!

You are the class on whose shoulders will fall the great task of leading the masses of the nation to their emancipation from the British imperialist yoke.

You are the class which alone can produce the movement which will emancipate all toilers from the social slavery which the rule of the capitalists imposes on the working people.

To carry out these great tasks, you, the working men and women of Ireland, must organise your forces, create your own party to lead the struggle – the Irish Communist Party.

No other class can lead the nation to independence. No other party but the party of the working class, the Communist Party of Ireland,

can lead the toilers to the goal of national freedom, to the unity of the North and South, to the overthrow of capitalism, to the emancipation of labour, to the dictatorship of the working class in alliance with the working farmers—the Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

History is on the side of Ireland's struggle. The capitalist system is collapsing. The workers' system, Socialism, is triumphant in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Revolution is growing alike in the subject nations and in the imperialist countries.

Fellow workers of Ireland! Forward to the building of a powerful Communist Party of Ireland which will lead to the destruction of national and social oppression for ever.

AN APPEAL TO I.R.A. VOLUNTEERS

A political eruption has occurred inside the Irish Republican Army. The artificial unity and political agreement of divergent elements has burst asunder. The growing intensity of the national and class struggles has broken down the flimsy wall built around the I.R.A. by the leadership in an effort to preserve the Army as a "reservation" for middle class political and social ideas and to shut out the policies and struggles of the revolutionary working class. Because the struggles for national freedom and social emancipation had now become indissolubly connected, the I.R.A. sooner or later had to face the issues of the present struggle, or renounce its whole revolutionary objective and past traditions. That movement has now come.

During the past three years, in particular, the leadership of the I.R.A. by the use of arbitrary discipline and bureaucratic methods have attempted to prevent the drawing closer of the Army to the revolutionary working class struggle. They have denied the rank and file the possibility of participating in revolutionary mass political activity. They have held the Army aside from the industrial struggles of the workers and the fight of the small farmers and agricultural labourers. Yet at the same time they have allowed the Army to be used as a stalking house for Fianna Fail. They have, behind a cloak of wordy criticism, given political and organisational support to Fianna Fail. They have forced the Army to retreat before the attack of the constitutional nationalists, led by deValera. They have sabotaged every effort to build a real mass anti-imperialist movement. They have refused to associate with any efforts made to build a mass opposition to Blueshirt Fascism They have played with revolutionary phrases and programmes and denied Volunteers the right of revolutionary political action. They have refused to embarass the Fianna Fail Government by revolutionary activity and retreated before the coercion drive of that Government upon the I.R.A. They have suppressed all attempts to develop a mass struggle against the Blueshirts and, under clerical fire have even renounced their own programmes and the policies of Saor Eire. They have expelled many of the best soldiers of the Army because they are revolutionary working class fighters, Communists.

Out of such a situation has developed and emerged the movement centred around the Athlone Manifesto and the National Republican Congress. Encaged in the political prison, in the cul-de-sac into which the I.R.A. leadership has led the Army, large numbers of rank and file members and leaders have been forced to break with the bureaucratic machine of Messrs. McBride and Twomey. They are seeking a way of approach to the revolutionary working masses. They are looking for the means with which to build a mass movement against Fascist imperialism, against the Fianna Fail coercion, against growing economic destitution and exploitation.

The Athlone Manifesto is a warning to the Irish Republican Army, leaders

and rank and file. This development presents the question of the whole future role of the members of the I.R.A. in the struggle for national and social liberation. To every member, from veteran to newest recruit, is presented the question: How can the revolutionary struggle for national and social freedom be developed, raised to a higher stage and brought to a successful conclusion? Their sincerity as anti-imperialist fighters is challenged by their recognition of the need honestly to face and answer that question, and then in the light of their answer to examine the policy and activities of the I.R.A. during the immediate past.

To every member of the I.R.A. the Communist Party of Ireland clearly and unhesitatingly gives the answer. The struggle for national and social freedom can only be successful through the widest possible development of the revolutionary struggle of the working masses in town and country against British Imperialism and Irish Capitalism, under revolutionary working class leadership and on the basis of the immediate every day struggles of the industrial workers, agricultural labourers and small farmers against wage cuts, unemployment, seizures of stock, coercion and Blueshirt Fascism.

That this is the only correct policy cannot be challenged. That we must engage in a joint struggle against British Imperialism and Irish Capitalism is clearly borne out by the whole history of the national struggle. Connolly pointed the same lesson more than twenty years ago. To-day the situation is clearer than ever before when every class and group having an economic interest in the maintenance of capitalism has completely deserted the struggle for national freedom. Imperialist-capitalists, financiers, bankers, ship and rail owners, native manufacturers, ranchers and big farmers—all now stand for the Treaty and are unanimous in using coercion against the revolutionary nationalist movement. What remains? The working class, agricultural labourers and small farmers. Only to them will the achievement of national independence and unity and the destruction of capitalism mean a release from wage slavery, poverty and oppression, and the opportunity to build a new and more human life.

If, to quote Connolly, "only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland", then only a leadership springing from and having its roots in that sole remaining revolutionary force can be trusted to lead the whole struggle correctly and with a guarantee of ultimate success. Any leadership of the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle which does not have its roots in the working class must of necessity come from such non-working class which has already deserted the struggle, and, inevitably such non-working class leadership will at some future stage of the struggle lead the movement into defeat or betray the movement. This is the historic lesson bought by the bitter experiences of the defeats of '98, '48, '21 and '22.

To expect that the working class can at one swoop be thrown into the final struggle to achieve national and social freedom is to expect that an army can enter a major battle without any previous training. Therefore, the final nation-wide struggle must be approached through countless, never-ending, every-day struggles, skirmishes, between the revolutionary working masses and their enemies; economic struggles, political struggles. In these struggles

the fighting forces of the masses will be drilled in revolutionary mass tactics and strategy, policy and organisation. They will be steeled and prepared, leadership and masses, for the final test.

Such are the tasks facing the leadership of the struggle for national and social freedom.

To Disaster or Victory?

That the present leadership of the I.R.A., Messrs. McBride, Twomey, etc. are retarding the carrying out of these tasks is clearly shown by their policy and activities during the immediate past. Not only are they unable to develop and lead this mass revolutionary struggle but actualy they are a definite obstacle to the development of that struggle.

Let us briefly recapitulate their activities of late. Support of Fianna Fail, prohibition of Army activity lest it "embarass the government", refusal to develop a mass anti-fascist movement and expulsion of members who attempted to do so; submission to the coercion drive of de Valera against the I.R.A.; rejection in practice of all working class activity, repudiation of their own programmes, their own parties, their own members. Political bankruptcy, and a policy leaing to the disruption of the Army. This is their contribution to revolutionary leadership. And now the final indication, in that a large section of Republicans have had to break openly with the present Army leadership before they could find a way of approach to the working class. Instead of Messrs. McBride and Twomey aligning the Irish Republican Army alongside the struggle of the Irish working class, they have constituted themselves a barrier between the Army and the masses and said to every member: Halt!

Is this the type of leadership the national independence struggle calls for? No! Ireland would never see a Republic if the revolutionaries were to follow the Army Council of the I.R.A.

The leadership of the struggle for national and social freedom must and can only come from the Irish working class, and in Connolly's words: "That only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland" should be burned into the mind of every Irish Republican. In its Manifesto the Communist Party of Ireland related this declaration of Connolly to the present-day struggle when it stated:

> "No other class can lead the nation to independence. No other party but the party of the working class, the Communist Party, can lead the toilers to the goal of national freedom, to the unity of North and South, to the overthrow of capitalism, to the emancipation of labour, to the dictatorship of the working class in alliance with the working farmers—the Workers' and Farmers' Republic."

The I.R.A. leaders are not politically honest. They have one policy in their paper and another in their programme. In their weekly paper they write of a joint struggle against British Imperialism and Irish Capitalism, but in the whole of their official programme they do not once use the word "capitalism". Why? They speak in their programme of the "establishment of social justice", of a "more just and saner economic and social order."

Not very original, Mr. McBride. The phrases are common to a number of

political figures throughout the world, including Ramsay MacDonald, Mussolini, Hitler, Oswald Mosley, Roosevelt and many other such types. It now seems we must add some more names to this distinguished list.

The unity of Ireland is a basic task of the struggle for national freedom, and this task can only be accomplished through the realisation of unity between the Nationalist and Orange sections of the Northern workers. Any movement which is incompetent to carry through this task is incapable of achieving the unity of our country. The present leadership of the I.R.A. have proved themselves incapable of overcoming the religious and political prejudices existing among the Northern workers, and of uniting Nationalist and Orange workers in a common struggle. There is not a single instance on record when the present leadership succeeded in drawing in any significant body of "Protestant" workers into a joint fight with their nationalist brothers. Such a failure alone is a condemnation of their whole policy and leadership.

The struggle against British Imperialism is a world-wide struggle, embracing workers and peasant farmers in all parts of the globe. To establish the closest relations between the Irish struggle and all sections throughout the Empire which are carrying on a struggle for national liberation is an elementary strategic task. Yet the present Army leadership have not only failed to establish such connections, but have actually broken off what slight relations existed in the past between Ireland and the international anti-imperialist movement.

Such are the vital tests for any political party or groups claiming the leadership of the revolutionary movement in Ireland to-day, and the leadership of Messrs. McBride, Twomey and Co., have failed to measure up to every one.

The Case for The Communist Party

But the Communist Party of Ireland, despite its smallness, its short existence and the tremendous campaign waged against it, has been able to accomplish to a greater or lesser degree the very tasks which overwhelmed the I.R.A. leadership.

It has connected the economic struggle of the workers with the national struggle, drawing militant trade unionists into the national struggle and revolutionary national fighters into the economic struggles. Only under the leadership and through the policy of the Communist Party have the national and economic struggles of the Irish workers been linked up into one whole. Only thus has the artificial separation been broken down, without at the same time having to utilise any artificial means to realise unity.

The Communist Party of Ireland has overcome the religious and political divisions between large numbers of the workers of the North, drawing both nationalist and non-nationalist workers into its ranks and uniting 50,000 Belfast workers in fierce three-day struggle against the armed forces of the Craigavon Government.

Finally, only Communism has been able to unite all anti-imperialist fighters the world over into an international fighting front against world imperialism. Only the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, under the

leadership of the Communist International, can record a complete victory against world imperialism, the destruction of the Russian Czarist Empire and the national liberation of over one hundred subject nations, formerly oppressed by Russian imperialism.

The Athlone Manifesto and the National Republican Congress represents a step forward, a significant step for large numbers of Republicans within and without the I.R.A. It represents a coming together on a common ground for action of the most militant elements in the nationalist and labour movements around the questions of the struggle against Fascism and the immediate economic issues of low wages, unemployment, child labour, bad housing, etc. The Republican Congress is not a party, nor is it the organisation which can lead and carry through the struggle of the Irish workers for complete national freedom and social liberation. It will be composed of diverse elements with divergent political outlooks, policies, programmes and forms of organisation; but they will have one thing in common: hatred of Fascism and a desire to fight it, opposition to the present economic conditions of the workers and small farmers and agricultural labourers. The delegates from the different organisations will be coming together for common action on these issues, and such a coming together is a grand thing to be welcomed by every worker, small farmer and national fighter.

But these are only the present immediate issues. Beyond this lies the greater struggle, the ultimate struggle to overthrow capitalist-imperialism. This struggle can only be organised, developed and successfully led by the revolutionary political party of the Irish working class—the Communist Party.

The Communist Party will exhaust every effort and means to make the Republican Congress a success—a congress of mass united action of all political elements throughout the thirty-two counties. But it will not relinquish or slacken in any way its daily, unceasing struggle to lead the working class beyond the Republican Congress to the revolutionary struggle for power, for the Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

To that struggle for power, to that struggle of the Irish workers to undo the Conquest, to destroy the domination and exploitation of British Imperialism and Irish Capitalism and to achieve national freedom and social liberation, the Communist Party calls every sincere nationalist fighter in the I.R.A. and the Republican Congress movement. We say to you in all sincerity and comradeship that there is no other road to the goal of national freedom and social emancipation than that of the Communist Party, and only in the ranks of the Communist Party can you fully play your part in that historic struggle. To the Volunteers still in the I.R.A. we say that memebership of the Communist Party is not opposed to your membership of the I.R.A., but offers the only leadership towards the goal you seek. To the volunteers outside the I.R.A. and active in the Republican Congress movement we say that only in the ranks of the Communist Party will you find the policy and tactics, the consciousness and knowledge, the self-sacrifice and determination which are the guarantee of making the Congress the success it should be. Only in the ranks of the Communist Party will you be able to reap the rewards of such a Congress, to make the Congress a jumping off ground

to greater struggles, the building of a greater mass movement under Communist leadership out of which will develop the forces capable of challenging and overthrowing the present system of capitalist-imperialism.

To all Volunteers, to all nationalist fighters we say: Into the ranks of the Communist Party of Ireland, the revolutionary party of the unconquered and unconquerable Irish working class; into the vanguard of the national and class struggle; into the ranks of the United Irishmen of today and shoulder to shoulder with the revolutionary workers of North and South, East and West, march forward to the realisation of our goal—the establishment of our historic task, the building up of the Workers' and Farmers' Republic in a free and united Ireland."

THE IRISH COMMUNIST, 1934

REPORT TO THE 7th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, MOSCOW, 1935

Comrades! After the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern the Communist Party of Ireland came into existence. For the first time in the history of the C.I., Ireland is officially represented at a world congress by delegates from a definitely organised Party.

We have a population of four-and-a-half-million in Ireland. There are approximately 800,000 insured workers. There are slightly above 200,000 workers organised in the trade unions.

Ireland is a very weak link in the chain of one of the major imperialist powers Great Britain, and has a long record of stubborn resistance to colonial robbery and enslavement. It was in Ireland that the first insurrection followed by a nation-wide peoples' mass movement for national liberation took place during the imperialist war, a movement which had tremendous effect on the colonial struggles in other parts of the Empire.

We are now on the eve of the second round of imperialist wars and revolutions. Does this find British Imperialism in a more strengthened position in regard to Ireland than it was in 1914? I do not think so. The treaty signed in 1921 between a section of the Irish bourgeoisie and the British only for a time postponed the further development of the conflict between them, which now emerges afresh in the period of shattered stabilisation and the accentuation of the world crisis of capitalism. Today the treaty that was made then is in the melting pot and finds British imperialism attempting to enforce its will on the Irish people by an economic war on Irish commerce. At this very moment the agencies of British imperialism in the North-East of Ireland are conducting a pogrom against the national minority and the labour movement as imperialism's reply to the growing anti-imperialist and working class upsurge. There were seven killed and 100 wounded within the past fortnight. Before the war Lenin described these imperialist agencies in Northern Ireland as akin to the Russian Black Hundred. This is the condition of affairs in the most western part of Europe on the doorstep of the leading country of imperialism.

In the light of this, the application of the decisions of this Congress to Ireland, the further strengthening of the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement of the toilers in that country, is an urgent task for our party and the international labour movement.

At the outset we have to clearly define our objectives in relation to imperialism, in relation to the national bourgeoisie and its national reformist party, led by De Valera. With the assistance of the Communist International at our first Congress in 1933, we issued a manifesto

taking our stand in the following:

First, that the destruction of imperialist domination in Ireland and the unification of the country into one state can only be carried through by the working class in alliance with the broad masses of the peasant farmers.

Second, that the national bourgeoisie, though still in opposition to imperialism is not a force to be relied upon in the national independence struggle but is the main force retarding and hindering that struggle. That the bourgeois nationalists headed by De Valera are striving to direct the struggle to further compromise in the class interests of the Irish capitalists, and third, that the complete liberation of Ireland from British imperialism can only be achieved in the struggle of the toiling masses against Irish capitalism and its national reformist parties.

In accordance with this estimation of the situation and the relation of class forces we put forth the slogan of "Complete national independence; A workers' and farmers' republic." We applied ourselves to the task of extending our connections with the workers and peasants organised in the republican organisations and in the trade unions. We can claim some successes in this work. We were successful in securing some influence with the traditional organisation of the national revolutionary struggle, the Irish Republican Army, we recruited members from within this organisation to the ranks of the Party, we waged a struggle to draw this important organisation closer to the working class and towards participation in the mass economic and political struggles of the workers. Our growing influence in this quarter was sufficient to alarm the bourgeoisie and the clerics who launched a pogrom against the Party in the name of religion at its very inception in 1933. The frenzy of this campaign conducted by the imperialist-clerical reaction was sufficient to stampede the middle class leadership of the Republican Army, who resorted to a campaign of expulsions of Communists from its ranks, and took a series of steps to arrest the leftward swing of the Republican workers towards Communism.

It was in some measure due to our work in this field that in 1934 a united front congress of Left-representatives of some trade union organisations was held in Dublin. This congress had the object of joining the Labour and Republican forces, of drawing the latter away from conspirative and terrorist activity to mass work. We had decided influence in this movement, which adopted the platform of national and social struggle. But we made a number of very serious errors of policy which prevented us from frustrating a split between the sectarian Socialists who wanted the founding of a new political party and to abandon the struggle for national independence; and the Republican left wing which agreed with us that the movement should be a united anti-imperialist bloc of the workers and Republican organisations of all shades.

Nevertheless, this movement has had some positive results.

We have had some successes also in connection with the workers' mass organisations, particularly the trade unions, by participation in economic struggles, though it must be frankly said that we are only at

the beginning of any real serious work in this field. We organised a miners' union for quarrymen and miners. We developed a leadership from within the miners, and led a strike which was successful in securing the demands of the workers. This inflamed the red scare to an unbelievable extent. The entire force of the clergy was hurled against the Party and the mine workers, and all believers were commanded to leave the union, to leave the Party, the unemployed workers' organisation, and to cease reading or distributing our weekly paper, *The Workers' Voice*, under penalty of excommunication from the church.

The political and social power of the church in Ireland is tremendous, and this campaign undoubtedly put big obstacles in the way of the development of our movement and was not answered by us with sufficient resolution and vigour. There were tendencies to capitulate before the onslaught, to accept the position of illegality, tendencies towards going into a similar position to that of the conspiratorial organisations. However, we can say that, to some extent, we surmounted our difficulties here and that within the miners we are still carrying on our work; our paper is circulating and our Party organisation has not been smashed.

The Communist Party organised a strike of 2,000 relief-workers in Belfast in October, 1932, in the big industrial centre of the country. Here we were successful in bringing into a united front huge masses of the population behind the strikers, and for the first time in many years to unite the workers of this city, whom the British imperialists have always kept divided by fanning religious strife, for their class interests. The imperialist government of this area, which is a subdivision of the British Government, let loose its armed forces against the workers, killing two strikers and making wholesale arrests. The struggle ended in complete triumph for the workers, relief scales in many sections being increased as high as 150 per cent.

This struggle gave our Party a very definite place in the working class movement and showed the Communist road of struggle in practice as the true way to unite the broad masses of the people against their capitalist enemies.

During the years of the crisis the Irish bourgeoisie made terrific inroads on the standard of living of the working class. In every industry – textile, transport, building, salaried workers, agricultural labourers – the workers' wages were attacked. Besides, there were wholesale dismissals and speeding up. For example 20 per cent of the railway workers lost their jobs during the years 1928-34. The workers put up a powerful resistance to these attacks. In 1932 the entire building industry of Dublin, the capital of the country, was involved in a strike of three months duration which ended in a partial defeat of the workers. In the same year we had a strike of railway workers for ten weeks, which ended in the reformist leaders signing an agreement over the heads of the workers for a ten per cent reduction.

At the present time, on the initiative of our Party, the trade unions in the railway and building industries are taking up the demand for the restoration of these cuts and a reduced working week.

In the recent period we have had a successful strike of Irish seamen, backed by solidarity action of the dockers. Dublin, this year, saw a two-months' complete stoppage of the printing workers, a period during which not a single newspaper was published. This strike resulted in very decisive victory and substantial wage increases for the workers in that industry.

The last two months witnessed the largest and most protracted strike in Dublin, when between 3,000 and 4,000 tram and bus workers, after a 100 per cent stoppage for a period of eleven weeks, compelled the employers to accede to a large part of their demands.

The Communist Party was able to exert some influence in a number of these struggles, despite its weakness in the trade unions, but in the tram and bus strike we can say we exerted a decisive influence. We were able to organise a number of workers from unions into the Party, to win the confidence of wide strata of the active non-Party strikers, to establish good contacts with the lower apparatus of the trade unions, and so to defeat the attempts of the reformists, repeated again and again during the strike, to surrender the struggle. Over 30 issues of the rank and file unity bulletin were published (now issued as a fortnightly organ), which secured very good influence among the men. Our successful work in this strike was due to a concrete application of the slogan "Unity in Action", which had the effect of curbing the disruptive activities of the rival cliques of reformist officials at the head of competing Irish and English unions, to establish a united front against the employers on the basis of the workers' wage demands; to work within all unions without exception and the avoidance of sectarianism in relation to the reformist organisations and lower union organs.

The Party is pushing ahead with its efforts to consolidate its influence among these workers, to work for trade union unity on the basis of properly elected and functioning branch committees which at the present time do not exist. These examples are sufficient proof of the growing intensity of the class struggle in Ireland and the possibility for the building of the Communist Party, provided we are able to overcome our isolation from the decisive sections of the organised workers and put ourselves in the forefront of the daily economic struggles.

Economic Situation and De Valera Government

The background of these widespread class conflicts is the severity of the crisis and the failure of the Republican bourgeoisie to surmount the economic and political difficulties which involve the country. De Valera has heaped a mountain of tariffs and taxes on the people's necessities of life, in pursuance of his policy of developing capitalist industry. In his last budget he put taxes on tea, tobacco, sugar, cut the vote for unemployment by 20 per cent, made a reduction in the vote for old age pension. At the same time he is obliged to vote millions of pounds in subsidies to the exporters of cattle and agricultural products to Great Britain, because of the British penal tariffs on Irish goods in retaliation for the

withholding of the farmers' land annuities by the Free State Government.

It is estimated that the Irish farmers have been losing from £15m to £20m annually since the British economic war was launched three years ago. The entire external trade of the country has fallen by 50 per cent in four years.

The unemployment problem is acute; there are approximately 200,000 unemployed in the whole country. In both areas of the country we have actual cases of death through starvation and suicides through loss of employment.

De Valera's national capitalist policy is based on the impoverishment of the masses of the agricultural population; on a regime of impoverishment for the unemployed; on a reduced standard of living for the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the major part of the working class. De Valera is able to carry through this policy and still retains a measure of support and acquiescence among the masses, because the masses fear a return to an imperialist regime of terror and impoverishment of the Cosgrave Party of finance capital; and more particularly because De Valera is able to appear as standing up, to an extent, to the British attempt to coerce the country into capitulation to imperialism. De Valera is able to place the situation in this light before the masses, thanks largely to the policy of the reformist Labour Party, which takes no stand of its own upon the national issue, which confines its activity to minor economic matters and leaves the national political issue entirely to whatever section of the bourgeoisie happens to be dominant at the moment.

Political Repression

At the present time the jails hold a large number of political prisoners, the overwhelming majority of whom are Republicans. Both the government of the Republican tri-colour and the government of the Imperialist Union Jack in Ulster are operating the most stringent coercion acts. Civil Courts and trial by jury have given way to military tribunals from whose findings there is no appeal, to arbitrary arrest and almost unlimited powers of detention without trial; and in the case of Northern Ireland, to deportation of citizens out of this part of the country. Two Republican workers recently served two years' imprisonment in Belfast Jail. They were given a government order on release prohibiting their living in the area. For violating this order, they received additional terms of imprisonment. All this is done not in a backward colonial part of the British Empire, but in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North Ireland; it is done under Magna Charta and the British Constitution!

The De Valera Government has used its powers to drive out of existence the important Left Wing Republican weekly paper, *An Phoblacht*. The De Valera Government has been badly frightened by the proposal of the Republican Army to form a united front with the Dublin tram and bus strikers, and because of this he started a

policy of very rigid oppression against the Republican movement.

We had to fight the fascist menace in Ireland. The Party, which is the second largest party in the State, the part of finance capital (Cosgrave), started a fascist movement to turn out the government and bring the country into complete subservience to British Imperialism. This movement evoked a stormy mass opposition, particularly in the cities and towns. The Party took an active part in this fight against the fascists through mass meetings and leaflets, its press. At present the fascist movement is split; imperialist monopoly capitalism has dropped O'Duffy, fearing that his demagogy of inciting the farmers to withhold the payment of taxes, rates and annuities might be taken up in deadly earnest by the farmers, and perhaps extended to bank debts, mortgages and other forms of interest slavery by which the big capitalists in Ireland rob and enslave the agricultural population.

The fascist movement, although it lacks a popular mass basis, is nevertheless a decided menace to the Irish workers and peasants. In many important rural areas it dominates and terrorises over the working population. Revolutionary workers have actually been murdered and maimed by fascists bands.

The working class will be able to further shatter the fascists to the extent that we are capable of organising the struggle of the small and medium farmers for the easing of the burden of taxation, special government-backed credits, and the stoppage of exorbitant interest payments on mortgages to banks, etc.

Our Weaknesses and Achievements

The perspectives before us in Ireland are those of sharpening class and anti-imperialist struggle. The central problem of our immediate task is the development of a broad united front of the working and farming masses for their immediate economic interests and to frustrate the designs of the imperialists to draw the country into the orbit of the British war plans. There is the definite danger that the national bourgeoisie, led by De Valera, will come to some arrangement with British imperialism on this issue. This is a very serious danger against which we must mobilise the entire masses of the Irish people.

Our Party is still poorly equipped for the tremendous tasks facing it. It has committed many errors of a sectarian and opportunist character due to unclarity in the handling of the national issues. In the beginning we classified De Valera in the same camp as the imperialist and confused the workers. When we corrected this mistake with the assistance of the C.I., there developed an opposite tendency to drag behind the policy of De Valera. Its work in the reformist trade unions, although improved in recent months, is still weak. We have not found our way to the broad masses in the provinces and among the peasantry. The problem of the development of leading cadres, of Marxist-Leninist education is a particularly burning one, and one which has not been tackled by us with sufficient earnestness.

What we have done so far is to establish the Party as a definite factor

in the working class movement. We have triumphed in the struggle for the streets in Dublin, for the right to conduct our agitation and propaganda in the large centres. We have defeated the attempt of the class enemy to smash our weekly Party paper, the *Workers' Voice*. We have given assistance, and in some cases actual leadership to workers in strikes, in the fight for the unemployed, in rent strikes, and against evictions of workers from their homes, in the struggle against fascism and in stimulating the opposition to the vacillating policy of De Valera in the struggle with British imperialism and his anti-labour policies in the field of social legislation.

Our task now is to apply the decisions of this Seventh Congress to the problems facing us. To do this demands the most diligent everyday work around the burning problems of how the people are to live, to secure deeper roots among the workers in decisive industries, and to develop out influence in trade unions and among the Republican organisation.

By so doing we will ensure that in the worldwide revolutionary convulsions before all capitalist countries, that in this the working masses of our country will do their duty to the international working class movement, to the world Party of our class, the Communist International.

The Communist International, September 20, 1935.

Now for the first time a collection of articles and pamphlets, relating to that struggle to build a Marxist–Leninist Party in Ireland is available for study. In addition to the pre-party material, the report on the Inaugural Congress and the C.P.I. Manifesto, we have included an interesting article on an attempt to induce I.R.A. members to join the party, as well as the party's report on its achievements and weaknesses, made to the 7th World Congress of the Comintern at Moscow, 1935.

Material and Source:

The Irish Case for Communism A pamphlet published by R.W.G. in Dublin, Jan. 1933. Written by Sean Murray, later to be the C.P.I.'s first General Secretary, it was advertised as containing the draft programme of the C.P.I., drawn up by the National Executive Committee of the R.W.G. for submission to the Inaugural Congress.

Why a Communist Party? An article which appeared in R.W.G. paper the *Irish Worker's Voice*, 11th March, 1933. It was written by Jim Larkin Jun., who was later elected Party Chairman at the Inaugural Congress.

The Constituent Congress of the Irish Communist Party An article by Seamus Mac Kee which appeared in Nos. 8 and 9 of the *Communist International* (1933), organ of the Comintern.

The Congress Report This brief summary of what transpired at the Inaugural Congress is taken from the *Irish Worker's Voice*, 17th June, 1933.

Ireland's Path to Freedom The Manifesto of the C.P.I. adopted at the Congress and published in pamphlet form jointly by Sphinx Publications, Dublin, and *Labour Monthly*, London in 1933. It was also published in March, 1934, by Workers Library Publishers, New York, U.S.A.

An Appeal to I.R.A. Volunteers An article originally titled, "The Crisis in Irish Republicanism" it is from the *Irish Communist*, theoretical organ of the Central Committee of the C.P.I. Only one issue of this publication appeared (Sept. 1934).

Report to the 7th International Congress, Moscow, 1935 . A report given by Sean Murray dealing not alone with achievements but with weaknesses. It appeared in the *Communist International* journal, Sept. 20, 1935.

HISTORICAL REPRINTS

Reprints of pamphlets, booklets and newspaper articles of historical value to the study of the Socialist Movement in Ireland.

No.		
1	James Connolly and Irish Freedom	G. Schuller
2	British Imperialism in Ireland	Elinor Burns
3	Marx, Engels and Lenin on the Irish Revolution	Ralph Fox
4	The Irish Republican Congress	George Gilmore
5	The James Connolly Songbook	James Connolly & Others
6	Workshop Talks	James Connolly
7	The Irish Question (1894)	John Leslie
8	The Historical Basis of Socialism in Ireland	Thomas Brady
9	The Connolly–Walker Controversy on Socialist Unity in Ireland	
10	The Story of Irish Labour	J. M. MacDonnell
11	Ireland Upon The Dissecting Table – James Connolly on Ulster & Partition.	
12	Convict No. 50945	Jim Larkin, Irish Labour Leader
13	Irish Labour and its International Relations in the era of the 2nd International and The Bolshevik Revolution.	
14	Freedom's Road for Irish Workers	"Ronald"
15	The Connolly – De Leon Controversy – On Wages, Marriage and the Church.	
16	The Irish Crisis, 1921 – The C.P.G.B. Stand	William Paul
17	The Struggle of the Unemployed in Belfast, 1932.	Tom Bell
18	The Irish Free State and British Imperialism	"Gerhard"
19	Sinn Fein and Socialism	James Connolly, "Charles Russell", Selma Sigerson
20	The Irish Case for Communism	Sean Murray, Jim Larkin Jun., Seamus Mac Kee & the C.P.I.

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